

months the time since custom decreed that she should pin up her fuzzle locks and lengthen her skirts? She opens the wicket and passes out of the shadow of the grove into the open field where the gay wind envelopes her and in its clasp she whirls round in breathless ecstasy. The day is young and fresh, beneath her feet are the silvered blades of spring grasses, her heart is in unison with young and tender things. Somewhere "beyond the world's most purple rim," she is dimly conscious that grief holds sway—hunger, thirst, pain, cruelty. She is dimly conscious also that some day she has got to look these fiends straight in the face. Some day!

But not in this hour of glad youth, with nothing in the past but a childhood full of good things, warm human love, long sunlit days, wonderful sweet smelling old fashioned flowers, the lowing of kine, and the singing of birds. The keen appreciative soul of the girl has drunk deep of nature's elixir, and the impressions of the golden bygone time will go with the woman to the grave—it may be half a century hence.

Across the field another woman comes. A slight laggard figure, with bent head and face hidden under the shadow of a cotton bonnet; she guides by the hand a toddling baby child, and as she comes near Andrea recognises in this shadow woman, Lois the blacksmith's daughter. She is close to Andrea before she raises her head.

"Lord, Miss, how yer skeered me—somehow you was in me mind—it's you, ain't it?"

"It's me, Lois, no ghost, and this is your little child, I heard about your baby, Lois, and all your trouble. I was very grieved, and Oh! you look sad and thin, and the child too,—come to Andrea, poor wee man," and stooping down she clasps the baby boy in her arms, and presses his cheek to her bosom. There is no glow of ruddy health on this baby's cheek, his little face is seared with suffering, and one eye has withered in its socket. Andrea turns hotly on the mother.

"Are you good to the child?" she questions sternly. "Do you keep it well fed, and warm? Poor lamb, it has no father, but it is a precious jewel—a mother should have strength to protect her own flesh and blood as the tigress does. What injury has happened to its eye?"

The mother pales and flushes, her poor trembling hands clutch at her bonnet strings, tears spring into her big sad eyes.

"Father can't never forgive me; now mother's dead he beats and clemes the child, it was him as blinded 'is eye, he flung his 'ammer at 'im, if it wasn't for neighbours, as give 'im a bit and a sup, he'd be clemmed to death, and I 'is mother a standing by." The two women stand still, and look deep down into each other's souls, the one soul up welling from a deep and fathomless spring of maternal passion, the other sunk in an abyss of woe.

"You can stand by and see your child starving?" Andrea questions in a hushed voice—"and the hand which flung that hammer—dear! dear! God!"—and she shakes a tense fist at the dreary sky.

"I's afeared of father," Lois says doggedly; "he's that cruel when 'e's in drink, he do sweer and curse that shameful, and calls me so; 'e calls 'im," she continued, turning her eyes to where her child rests on the warm heart of Andrea, "that there devil's fly-blow. I'm a'most mad a times—'e's druve us out this morning without any vituals, and *I can't bear it no longer.*"

Half an hour later Andrea is still leaning over the wicket gate—hunger, thirst, pain, cruelty—she had shaded her clear eyes from the sun, and gazing beyond the purple rim, had seen them stalking afar off—and now they were here clamouring at her gate—at her heart strings. As she rests her chin on the topmost rail of the gate her brain is working out a plan whereby the "devil's fly-blow"—shall be removed from the brutalizing sphere of his grandfather's cottage—her eyes follow half unconsciously the figure of a woman and a child, who are stepping hand in hand, on to the narrow plank bridge—over swollen, hurrying waters. For a moment the two figures stand side by side over mid stream, and then the woman throws up her arms—the baby child sways—a great gust of turbulent wind sweeps across the uplands, and the woman comes over the bridge alone.

Then Andrea knows that she has looked upon the horrible face of—murder.

Later on, the whole gruesome story is made known to the world through the reports of the police courts; we read "that yesterday Lois Bellamy was found guilty of the murder of her child. On the jury returning their verdict, a most painful scene ensued. In an incoherent speech broken with sobs, and with blood streaming down her nostrils, the wretched prisoner related how she had been maddened by her desertion by the father of her child (whose name by-the-by did not transpire) and by the sight of its sufferings at the hands of her drunken father, and how the water looked cool—and she let go its hands—and a great gust of wind came and the child was drowned."

Nevertheless, the judge puts on the black cap, and delivers sentence, that the woman "shall be hanged by the neck until she is dead."

The burning questions I would ask is who is to blame for these horrible child murders?

It is presumable that there is something fundamentally wrong in a so-called civilization, which drives a mother to kill her own child.

Is the law of this realm just which deals with the illegitimate child?

If not just, from whence shall the spirit spring, which shall enforce the alteration of the letter of these laws?

Is it possible to make a moral law which shall subordinate the natural law, without the avenging reaction of the stronger force?

Is it moral law to brand the innocent human creature, and deprive it of its civil and human rights?

#### WOMEN.

The Queen will perform the ceremony of opening the new parish church of Crathie, near Balmoral, in June. The church is now practically completed, the pulpit, a highly artistic structure of Scottish granite, porphyry, marble, and pebbles, having received the finishing touches within the last few days.

Princess Christian has fixed Tuesday, May 14th, and three following days, for the annual summer sale at the Royal School of Art Needlework, and will preside over the proceedings.

A new and important feature of the National Council Meetings of the British Women's Temperance

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