

never had that I would not have touched the stuff in Egypt, and had I been sober that woman would never have got me. It is so hard to leave you alone, dear, but I'd sooner die than live as I should have to live. Oh, mother, for my sake tell all the boys to sign the pledge, and beg the Government not to give poison to its soldiers."

He lay exhausted, and they thought him gone. Once more his eyes opened, and looking at the dear face bending over him, he murmured, "My mother." Again raising himself slightly, a great flash of joy illuminated his face as he said, "Jesus!" then gently falling back into his mother's arms, he passed to "where beyond earth's voices there is peace." Next morning Mrs Frazer and a friend stood beside the bier where Jack lay, robed for his last sleep.

"I thought to have your strong young arm to lean upon in my declining years. I freely gave you up to fight for your country. Death I could have borne, but Oh! this disgrace. Mary," she said, turning to her friend, and speaking with rising passion in her tones, "Had my boy lived I could never have forgiven the military authorities. It is hard to lose them by a clean death on the battle field, but to have them live victims of a horrible disease is infinitely worse. I never thought I would be thankful to know my boy was dead."

Gently she stooped and kissed his cold brow. "My baby boy; May God forgive the doctor who ordered you rum to your ruin!"

Mrs Frazer thought it her duty to do all she could to save other mothers from passing through sorrow such as hers. Years ago her husband had had a friend, Walter Broad, who had been elected to Parliament, and was now Zealandia's Defence Minister. In olden days he had been fond of her little son, so now she wrote to Mr Broad, recalling those long-ago days, and asking, for the sake of auld lang syne, if he would grant her an interview. He wrote expressing his pleasure at the renewal of an old friendship, and appointed a time for her to call at his home.

The Minister received her kindly, and soon she was seated beside the fire in his study, and facing him across the rug. Sternly holding in

check her bitter sorrow, she briefly told him Jack's sad story, and spoke of her great desire to shield others from a like fate.

"Oh, Sir," she said, with kindling eyes and passionate voice, "Can't you do something to safeguard boys like Jack? Why is it that everywhere in our Empire politicians shiver when the brewer cracks his whip? Oh; I am ashamed of my country. When Canadian mothers discouraged their sons from enlisting, their Minister promised to make the camps safe for the boys. He forbade liquor in Canadian camps, but as soon as they got to England a wet canteen was placed in their camp. Russia, France, and Roumania have all stopped the traffic in strong drink, but England only does what she is compelled to do. Do you wonder that Australian mothers voted against conscription? Who would vote for boys to be conscripted to a fate like Jack's? My old-time friend, can't you stop the rum ration to our troops both at home and abroad? England won't respect our wishes. She does not deserve our soldiers. We send our boys to fight a foreign enemy, not to swell the dividends of the enemy within. Admirals, generals, statesmen, ship-builders, and doctors all tell us it is the cause of national inefficiency, but what care the men who want to make fortunes out of their brewery shares? The only patriotism they possess is to fill the pockets of themselves and friends. Unless England shakes this incubus from her nothing but national ruin can await her. A righteous God will never give world dominion to a nation ruled by brewers, who will sacrifice every mother's son to swell their own coffers, and whose every dollar is stained with blood."

The Minister was deeply moved, for he had loved the curly-headed little boy. He soothed the mother, and promised to think over what she had said. Then he took her and left her with his wife, whose power as a comforter he well knew.

Mr Broad returned to his room, but he did not get to the work which awaited him. His thoughts were too disturbed. He was face to face with his own awakened soul. He was not an emotional man, but the story he had heard had strangely moved him. Haunted by the words, "The only son of his mother, and she was a

widow," he owned that this son had been entrusted to his care. Had he failed to adequately protect these boys from the drink evil? Was he a man to crouch in dread before the power of the liquor ring? His pride was hurt, but a nobler feeling began to stir in his heart. He walked to the window, and from it gazed upon the scene below. Zealandia's loveliest city lay spread at his feet. He lifted his eyes to the lofty hills surrounding it, and he looked far away down the harbour to the lighthouse at the entrance, and beyond that still till he could catch a gleam from the blue waves of the Pacific. The moon was rising just over the Heads, and turned the sea to living gold. As he looked upon that pathway of gold, strange unwonted thoughts rose within him of the "sea of glass with mingled fire." Was Mrs Frazer right? Was the Eternal God in the crucible of suffering preparing the British Empire for world dominion? What might not that Empire accomplish for the world were she always loyal to the highest ideals! If she always sent out to weaker races men like Chinese Gordon, like Lawrence and Havelock; men who spent themselves for others without a thought of reward; men whom their dark-skinned brothers loved and trusted. Could she but eliminate the greed for gold, and so rule and so decree that no company which exploited weaker races, which ground them down by usurious interest, should be able to claim the protection of the Union Jack. With shame he thought how for greed of gold opium had been forced on China, how the gigantic evil of strong drink was destroying white and black races alike, and all to fill the pockets of the ghouls who batten on the ruin and death of others. A flush of shame darkened his face when he contrasted Russia and Roumania with Great Britain. How the Russian Government, on the eve of a mighty war, had by a stroke of a pen stopped the vodka traffic and robbed itself of a princely revenue. Roumanian statesmen had given up the profits from their vineyards for the national good. What a contrast to Britain! How the liquor-sellers had howled at the prospects of reduction in their profits, and had terrified a weak Government into submission.

Hour after hour the Minister spent in reviewing the situation. Never a