

frosty morning; "if Clatterville folks put up with this, there's an end o' the good old spirit o' New England. If things goes on so, half the inhabitants will move over to Brandywine village afore Christmas, where there's no sich sectarian nonsense a going on."

The old sinner was mistaken. Nobody moved over to Brandywine village on account of the reformation in Clatterville; and the improvement in the manners and habits of the people soon became a topic of universal remark.

Days, weeks, and months, rolled rapidly along, and no trace was discovered of the runaway boy. Before this dark cloud settled over his dwelling, Mr. Sharp had appeared, like Sir Balaam, to believe that God's good providence was a lucky hit. But he had learned an important lesson of the instability of earthly happiness. His pride had become humbled; and he was now perfectly satisfied that the world was not made for Cæsar nor for Aminadab Sharp. He now perceived that riches, even if they do not take wings and fly away, cannot buy back the peace of a broken-hearted father. The tongues of a thousand sycophants could not now charm away the bitter conviction that he was the parent of a drunkard and a thief. Sad were the feelings of this unhappy man when he reflected upon the origin and progress of this domestic calamity, and he remembered the words of the holy volume, "*And Nathan said unto David, Thou art the man!*"

It was very natural that at the period of this calamity, Mr. Sharp, in the compass of a few weeks, should have examined his own heart more carefully than during the whole of his previous life. Such was certainly the fact. He was introduced to a new code of sensations; he began to have a practical understanding of the passage which teaches the broken in spirit, that the help of man is a reed.

In this season of affliction, he derived the greatest support from the consolations of an excellent wife; he began fully to understand the value of the gem which he had taken, for better for worse. It was about a month after the departure of Aminadab, that Mr. Sharp, returning home in the evening, had retired privately to an apartment connected with their sleeping chamber. As he was sitting there alone, ruminating on his misfortune, his wife entered her chamber with little Joel; and supposing herself within hearing of no being but the Giver of every good and perfect gift, she proceeded to offer up her evening supplication. The yet unconverted husband sat listening to the prayers of a child of God.—He listened for a while in solemn and respectful silence; but when, in a voice scarcely audible for her sobs and tears, she asked of God his guidance and support for a lost and a wicked boy; and that he would sustain an afflicted father, and bring him into the fold in his own good time, he could no longer repress his emotions, but rising from his seat crept forward silently, and knelt by her side.

On the subject of family prayer, this was no longer a house divided against itself; and many other good things were admitted one after another. Joel became an uncommonly fine boy. He was carefully brought up in the way he should go, and there was no reason to apprehend that he would depart from it when he should come to be an old man.

About five years and a half after the departure of their eldest son, Mr. Sharp received a letter from the chaplain of the State Prison in the State of ———, in the following words:—

Dec. 14th, 18—.

DEAR SIR,—Peter Jones, a convict in this prison, who is dying of consumption, has desired that the enclosed may be forwarded to you, as soon as possible.—Respectfully, your humble servant, Aminadab Sharp, Esq., Clatterville. W— I—

The enclosed letter was in the following words:—

State Prison, Dec. 12th, 18—.

DEAR PARENTS,—Receive the dying words of a wicked child; I have but little strength, and my words must be few. When I

left you, I took the Providence Road and came to New York, where my life was consumed in all kinds of dissipation, while the money lasted which I took from my father's desk. When it was all gone, I got into the company of those who put me in the way of getting more. I have two or three times resolved to reform. At one time I did not taste strong drink for three weeks; I worked till I had earned almost enough to bear my expenses home. I kept out of the way of strong drink, for my hankering was so great that I was afraid I should not hold out. One afternoon, as I was on the wharf, a man came to speak to me who had been drinking rum. I smelt his breath, and I could resist no longer. I went to the dram shop, and my earnings were soon spent. For the gratification of my appetite, I was induced to rob a gentleman of his pocket-book, which brought me here.—Dear Mother, God will reward you for all your good counsel, though it has been lost upon your poor boy. If I could only see you, it would be a comfort to me before I die. I would try to muster strength to crawl out of my bed, and ask your forgiveness on my knees.—Dear father, don't let little Joel have any strong drink, but heed the last request of his dying brother.—I am known here only by the name of Peter Jones.

From your un dutiful son,

AMINADAB SHARP.

The conception of that anguish which this letter produced is only within the province of imagination. I have neither the hand nor the heart to give it form. "O my dear husband," said Mrs Sharp, "let us fly to this poor prodigal before he dies."—It was determined to start on the morrow's dawn.—Another letter from the chaplain came in the midnight mail—the victim of a father's imprudence was no more.

The last account I received of this family was in the fall of the year 18—. I then passed through the village; and while the horses were resting at the inn, I noticed a gentleman walking slowly alone, with his hand behind his back, who every now and then shook his head in a singular manner.—"Who is that gentleman?" said I.—"It is Mr. Sharp," said the hostler, "who lost his son: he is somehow melancholy as you see; and as he goes along, he often mutters to himself *poor boy, poor boy!*"

Joel has grown up an excellent young man, and abundantly repays his mother for all her maternal care. He is a pattern for all young persons in the village, teaching them, by his example, to honour their fathers and their mothers, that their days may be long in the land which the Lord their God hath given them.

#### INFLUENCE OF THE TEMPERANCE REFORMATION IN BRINGING TO LIGHT BURIED TALENT.

How much intellect—cultivated intellect—was drowned in the intoxicating bowl at the commencement of the Temperance Reformation! And how many intellects, not cultivated, but of native, original strength, were crushed and prevented from rising to that eminence, which, but for intemperance, they would have attained! Who of us has not known some noble youth—high-minded in association and conduct—fond of the true and beautiful—full of generous impulses, and with an intellect which, if properly disciplined and directed, would have placed him high on the roll of fame—who of us, we say, has not known such a youth overthrown by this inveterate destroyer, and left, like some tall tree, scathed by the lightning.

"A withered, dead, and lifeless thing.

From which no verdant branch might spring."

Let us glance, for a moment, at a few of those naturally strong-minded, and gifted men, who have been redeemed through the influence of this reform. We have in our own State, more than one untutored, but self-tempered genius, who, though not polished in the schools, possess those original and vigorous intellects, which, had they been disciplined in