

The inn-holder went out, and returned with a message that the chairman would be happy to wait upon him in a short time.

"Mr. Burley's case," said the landlord, "is rather remarkable."

"Yes, sir," said Mr. Atherton, "his education and property did not appear to indicate that he would come upon the town for support."

"Why, as to that sir," the inn-holder replied, "I suppose that very rich and very learned men, will sometimes become drunkards, and get into the poor house. I referred more particularly to Mr. Burley's reformation. It has been a town's talk here for nearly two years."

At this moment the door opened, and a person entered, whom the landlord announced as the chairman of the managers. After a short pause, "I understand, sir," said he, "that you wish to ask some questions respecting Mr. Burley."

"Yes, sir," said Mr. Atherton, "I feel no ordinary interest in his fate, he was an early friend of mine. I saw him about five years ago, in a condition extremely miserable and degraded. I passed a night in your village at that time, with a Mr. Soder, who appeared to take some interest in the fate of this poor man, and promised to write me; I understand the old gentleman is dead."

"Yes, sir," replied the chairman, "he has been dead rather more than three years. I presume your name is Atherton, sir, is it not?"

"It is," said Mr. Atherton, with some indication of surprise.

"Mr. Soder," rejoined the chairman, "was my father, and he would have written you if he could have conveyed any information which would have given you pleasure. It was but yesterday that my mother, who is yet living, was remarking, as Mr. Burley walked by, that she wished Mr. Atherton could witness the extraordinary change in this poor man's appearance. And I can assure you, sir, that it is not in his appearance only."

"Mr. Soder," said Mr. Atherton, taking him by the hand, "you cannot imagine the pleasure I receive from this intelligence."

"Oh, yes, I can, sir," said Mr. Soder, "for I have heard my father and mother both speak of the kind interest which you took in this unhappy man. With your permission I will give you some account of all that has passed in relation to Mr. Burley, since you were last in the village."

Mr. Atherton assured him that he should be truly obliged to him for the information.

"I will just observe, in the outset," said Mr. Soder, "that Mr. Burley was probably drunk, for the first time in his life, in this very room; and from that time he was constantly in the habit of carousing in this very spot, drinking and playing cards with old Colonel Cozy, and a few of the same stamp, until he had wasted his whole property. This house is, at present, a temperance tavern."

"I thought so," said Mr. Atherton, "from an observation of the host."

"Yes, sir," continued Mr. Soder, "and a very excellent house it is; the proprietor is a total abstainer from principle, and not one of those who conceive that the friends of temperance are bound to support a wretched establishment, and pay first-rate charges for fourth-rate comforts and accommodation, merely because the proprietor has resolved to sell no strong drinks. Old Col. Cozy died four years ago on a thanksgiving day. At four o'clock in the afternoon, after a hearty meal, he dropped the tankard from his hand, and expired in a fit. I think it was about four years and a half ago, that Mr. Burley lost both his boys, and with them an annuity, depending upon their lives. The loss of the annuity removed the only obstacle to his reception at the poor house. My father said it was the only chance for him, though a doubtful one. He was not posted as a common drunkard;

and his removal to the poor house produced a considerable sensation in the village. An hundred acts of kindness and generosity were recalled, which he had performed in better days. But there appeared to be no other course. He was found fast asleep, not far from a grog-shop, on a very cold night, and next morning he awoke in the workhouse. He was carried through the usual process of seasoning as we call it."

"Prays sir," said Atherton, "what is that?"

"Why, sir, we give them no aident spirits, without any regard to their previous habits. They become extremely weak; and their countenances are expressive of the greatest human misery. They commonly believe they shall die. But they are mistaken to a man. I have had the supervision of the town's poor for several years, and although we have received drunkards of both sexes, in every stage of the habit, and have adhered scrupulously to the system of total abstinence, we have not lost a subject, as we believe, in consequence of such a course. Such is the practice throughout the state, and such it has been in these establishments for many years, without any relation to the general temperance reform. Nothing could exceed the earnestness of Mr. Burley's importunities for rum. He has told me since that he expected to die for the want of it; and nothing could exceed the horrors which he then endured. He was certainly the last man in whom I should have expected such a reformation. We treated him as we treated others; and in about a fortnight, when he began to recover his strength, he was sent out with a gang of hands to work on the highway. He took his lot very hardly. When any person passed, whom he had known, he usually contrived to work with his back towards them. My father came home one day and said it would not be a miracle if Burley should reform; for he had stopped and conversed with him on the road apart from the other hands, and that the poor man appeared exceedingly mortified at his past misconduct, and that his conversation gave evidence of a full possession of his former understanding."

"Not long before the old poor house was burnt down, Burley desired to speak to me alone. "Mr. Soder," said he, "I trust I am sufficiently humbled. I am sensible that I have brought my misfortune and disgrace upon my own head, with my own hands; and if you have any disposition to do me a great favour, I will show you the way. Notwithstanding my degradation, I am not so low, even in my own esteem, as not to be deeply sensible of my disgrace in being sent to labour upon the highway. I feel myself able, and I am more than willing, to teach a village school, or even to prepare lads for the University. Am I so entirely lost that no one will trust me?"

He burst into an agony of tears.

"But I fear, Mr. Atherton," said Mr. Soder, "I fear I give you unnecessary pain."

"Not at all, sir," said the other, as he wiped the tears from his eyes, "you give me nothing but a melancholy pleasure."

"Well, sir, I was much moved by his appeal, and I told him that he should not be so employed any more, and I would see what I could do for him. The first person to whom I spoke upon the subject, was Squire Blaney. "Try him," said he, "I'll send my son to him to-morrow. If Burley will keep sober, and teach a school, there will not be his equal in the county. Nothing could surpass his grateful emotion when I communicated the success of my very first application. "I thought," said he, "that I was alone in the world, but I find that I am not. I did not expect this from Squire Blaney; if there was a man in the village, who disliked and despised me, I thought he was that man. How erringly we judge of one another. Tell Squire Blaney that I have forgotten many injuries in this world, but never a benefit; and that I will strive to show him by my dealings