

of New York; and, after a moment's pause, continued, "my accounts are not now so clear as then." By this time the old man had considerably recovered from the intoxicating draught which had so stupified him, and had a clear conception of what was said.

What, said I, has brought such a reverse of fortune? This interrogation fell with great power upon the old man, and in an instant his countenance changed, his head dropped, and he seemed to be lost in painful reverie, as if his whole life, like a panorama, was spread before him, in which he beheld his happy and unhappy days—the days of prosperity when peace smiled upon him, and plenty was ever in his possession. He remained in this state several moments, then raising his head, faintly exclaimed, "Ah! the evil that has befallen me and my family is too painful to be related." "What, said I, have been your misfortunes?" and paused for a reply.

The old man filled with emotions, and with a voice scarce above a whisper, answered, "Rum! Rum!" and continued, it, like the worm which preys at the core of the tree and deprives it of life, has been preying at the hearts of my family, several already have fallen victims to his mighty power, and here am I, but the mere form of a human being, without home or friends, the monster has drunk up my fortune, my respectability has been buried in my vices, my fortune has vanished like the morning dew before a summer's sun; and soon I shall be sacrificed at the shrine of Bacchus, where I have been a faithful devotee.

Here the old man paused, buried his face in his hands, and like the prodigal son gave himself up to deep remorse, but unlike him, had no source by which he might palliate the miseries of a wounded conscience. After the pangs of tortured mind had somewhat abated, I asked him to relate the history, cause, and circumstances of this great grief? Well, said he, I never like to think of them, they pain me so, and when they come upon me I endeavour to drown them by drinking, but as you are young I will relate them, probably they will become of advantage to you. I thanked him, and requested him to proceed. Well, said he, I shall have to be brief, as a long description would be so tedious, but to begin: My father was a respectable and wealthy merchant in the city of New York, and lived in all the luxury the climate would produce, or the mind devise. My mother was a dear old lady, kind and affectionate; never did an unkind word pass her lips; her devotion to me was as the ever flowing torrents of the Nile: and never was her countenance darkened by an expression of gloom, until I, by my base ingratitude, and flagrant crimes brought it on. I had no brother, and but one sister, who, in my childhood, was my constant companion; we played together, walked together, and if I ever left her to seek employment in the street, she would hail my return with delight, catch me by the hand and lead me to see her new playthings; she was, in fact, my guardian angel; she was so devoted and gentle-hearted, that her influence, like the incessant breath of heaven, surrounded me with an atmosphere of love, purity, and happiness. My father was an indulgent and kind-hearted man, who gratified me to all the capricious notions and childish whims which my youthful fancy could originate; nothing could satiate my propensities.

"I went to a select school until I entered my seventeenth year, when my father wishing me to learn the mercantile business, placed me in his own store. From this time, I date the beginning of that life, which now bears me down. Taken away from the holy influence of a loving mother, whose maternal affection for her son knew no bounds—whose kind endeavors to instill in my mind the advantages and happiness of religion, virtue, and an unblemished character, I soon became indifferent to those kind admonitions, and followed the example of my new associates. Being of a kind disposition, and always having a constant supply of money, my company was sought by many young men.

"At first I was timid about going to the theatre, hotels, and other places of loitering; but they told me there was no impropriety in it, called me a cowardly and effeminate creature, which was too much for my proud spirit to endure, and I consented.

"They pressed me to take a little wine, or as they called it some innocent drink, and after repeated refusals I was forced to drink a swallow. Soon I even relished the social glass—my former forebodings of such things vanished in proportion to my indulgence, and the joy occasioned by the company of my kind mother and free-hearted sister, was no longer as agreeable as in my younger days. Thus I went on, from one step unto another, until I became a confirmed drinker. At the age of twenty-two my father

took me into business with him, and having an accumulated fortune, every desire was gratified without regard to expense. Notwithstanding all my efforts to keep my profligacy hid from my mother and sister, it became too painfully evident to them, and they entreated, besought, and pled with me to abandon my dissolute habits. Encouraged by their entreaties, I resolved to lead a new life, and accordingly joined the temperance society. About this time I courted and obtained the hand in marriage of one of the most handsome and admirable ladies in New York City. She was lovely, intelligent and noble-hearted, and for a time not a drop was wanting to make the cup of happiness full. But meeting some of my old associates, they insisted upon me to take a social glass with them. I refused, and told them the evil that would follow; but one glass, said they, for an old friend—and overcome by their pressing I accepted.

"This drink only gave me a thirst for more, and my old appetite once awakened it arose with double power—tore the good resolution from my heart—proclaimed me his victim—and prostrated me in the lowest state of degradation. This was almost a death-blow to my father's family, and my wife, the emblem of loveliness and purity—the loved one of my bosom, and the idol of my heart. They surrounded me with entreaties—impressed me with the fact that my own happiness, as well as that of my family and dear wife, depended upon my total abstinence from the cursed thing.

"I resolved, and resolved to become temperate, but the power of passion was too strong for principle, and despite the most powerful efforts to redeem my lost character, my base propensities, like the burning of a volcano, are destined to burn until all human principles and even my very soul is consumed.

"My friends seeing every effort proved fruitless gave me up as lost—I neglected my business—my money flowed like water, and my respectable friends one by one left me.

"My wife having been raised tenderly, could not endure such calamities, and the anguish of being brought so low, planted the seed of sorrow, grief and disconsolation, which eventually ripened in death. The last endearing tie which had any influence or restraint upon my ungovernable passion being taken away, I fell completely into the power of the demon, and became his willing vassal.

"At last the thread of life was snapped—her head was bowed, life dropped the distaff through his hand serene; and loving neighbor smoothed her careful shroud, while death and misery closed the awful scene.

"My father and mother have both gone to the grave, having been buried in their old age by my dissipated habits, which bore down on them with great weight, and filled their last days with sorrow. My sister was an early subject of disease; consumption having seized her with an unyielding grasp, and her disease being increased by my prodigality, she sunk into an untimely grave, when she had scarce arrived at the bloom of life.

"Now stranger you have my history," said he, "and a sad history it is; just like a book filled with every sort of crimes and misdemeanors, with scarcely a good line in it, except it be in the preface. Had I my life to go over again, no young man, except he be moral and temperate, should be my companion. This is the cause of all my grief, for had I taken a pious mother's counsel, and not gone into such company, I might this day have been a happy man. But instead of that I went contrary to her direction, and now I am reaping the fruits of my disobedience, being an outcast from society, wandering about to and fro in the earth, without a place to shelter my head—clothed in misery and disgrace, and more than all, I am standing upon the edge of an awful eternity, and the swift current of time will soon precipitate me over the mighty precipice." Here the old man stopped, gave a sigh which seemed to shake his weak frame, and turned his face from me. Not wishing to increase his sorrow, which was already too heavy, I did not question him any farther; and by this time the spires and domes of the city of P— were emerging from the thick volumes of smoke which enveloped it like a cloud, and consequently all were preparing for a hasty desertion from the boat.

We parted, doubtless for the last time, but the impression made upon my mind by the man's appearance and simple narrative, was deep and lasting, and filled me with greater horror of that worst of evils—which has, and is still tearing asunder the sacred bonds that unite happy homes and loving hearts.—*Delaware Herald.*