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A SECTARIAN THING.

(Concluded)

The supper hour arrived, and Aminadab had not returned. The shades of evening began to gather, and the parents became alarmed for his personal safety. At length it was ascertained, beyond a doubt, that he had run away. One of his late associates, as had a boy as any in Clatterville gave the information, that Minny, as he was called by his companions, suspecting the object of the Parson's early visit, had listened at the key-hole, until he heard his father declare his resolution to give him a flogging, when he determined, as he said, "to clear out." Minny, the informant stated, had plenty of cash, for he had shown him the bills. The latter part of this intelligence induced Mr. Sharp to examine the writing desk in his chamber. He found it had been broken open, and rifled of a pocket-book, containing about three hundred dollars in bills.

When the moral barrier is broken down, when a breach is once made by the artillery of sin, the whole heart is not likely to be occupied by one solitary tenant. Crime is a social creature; it is gregarious in a remarkable degree. Few there are who have passed through the higher degrees of infamy, and finally settled down for life on a fellowship in the state-prison, who cannot remember the *grog-shop*, which was the primary school where they received their elementary instruction. Aminadab had no sooner lost all respect for virtue in general, by becoming a tippler, than he lost all respect for his parents, and all fear of God; and became almost immediately an *idler*, a *truant*, a *liar*, and a *thief*!

Such measures were employed as seemed best calculated to ascertain the direction he had taken, but in vain.

Upon an early day of the ensuing week, Mr. Sharp waited upon Parson Moody, and expressed a wish to subscribe the pledge of the temperance society. The good man brought forth the book with the greatest alacrity, and placed it with

pen and ink upon the table. It was the merchant's usual custom to employ only the initial letter of his given name; but, on the present occasion, he wrote *Aminadab Sharp* at full length, with a heavy hand, and doubtless with a heavier heart. He admitted, with perfect frankness, to Parson Moody, that he had totally misapprehended the character of the temperance reform; not because the subject was at all complicated in itself, but simply because he had not taken sufficient interest in the matter to examine the nature of his early prepossessions against it. "Experience has been to me," said he, with a deep sigh, "a severe instructor; but the lesson will never be forgotten." He laid down the temperance book, and took his leave.

Shortly after his departure, Deacon Gurley called at the parsonage. It is to be regretted that the conduct of some of the deacons should have excited unkind suspicions in the reader's mind, as is probably the case in regard to Deacon Gurley. But this respectable man had never trafficked in broken constitutions and broken hearts. He was a steady supporter of the cause of temperance—"Good news, Deacon Gurley," said the clergyman. "Ah," said the Deacon, "has a neighbour found his son?" "No," replied Parson Moody, "but he has found his conscience, and a book which is even a greater finding; he has signed the pledge of the temperance society."—"Can it be possible?" said Deacon Gurley; he "lucked to the draught-shop in Clatterville; for neighbour Sharp never does any thing by halves."—"Here it is," said the good Parson, taking up the book—"but bless me, what is this? he has not been signing of his blattling paper, has he?" continued the minister, holding up an hundred dollar bill, which had been placed between the leaves. "That is very well," rejoined the Deacon; "but fifty such would be less beneficial to the cause than the force of his example, and the effect of those exertions, which he will certainly make in its behalf." As I said before, Aminadab Sharp does nothing by halves."

The Deacon's predictions were speedily verified to the letter. Mr. Sharp was in nobody's debt, and a great many people were in his. The importers, distillers, taverners, grocers, and retailers, with the multitude of tipplers and loaf-eaters, could in no way thwart or annoy him. He did not want their votes, for he would never consent to be a candidate for any office. He had a number of these people for his tenants; they were all promptly notified, that their leases would not be renewed. He was the sole proprietor of the principal hotel; he made immediate arrangements with the lessee, and converted it into a temperance house. No person was admitted to work in the factories who would not pledge himself to abstain from intoxicating drinks. He did all in his power to circulate information on the subject of the evils of intemperance; and whenever he passed a group of idle boys, he was sure to rouse their better energies into profitable action, by throwing among them some good little book, or temperance tale. Several of Mr. Sharp's tenants agreed to continue their leases on the terms he had imposed. "Sharp is the word, row-a-days," said an old gray-headed fiery looking fuddler, as he turned off, disappointed of his dram, from the fourth grocery store, in a cold