

terrible quarrels, and all about nothing. Rum was at the bottom of them all. I don't really think we should have had any hickering, if it hadn't been for rum. The first time we fell out, we were fuddled, both of us; and we went on from bad to worse, till there was no kind of ill turn that Bailey wouldn't do me, and I wasn't behind him in any sort of mischief. Our wives were separated from each other, and there was a complete family quarrel. Bailey's wife and he had a terrible time of it; she took to liquor, and he handled her roughly enough. 'That poor woman,' said he, pointing to his wife, 'had a hard time of it, too; but she never took a drop of the vile poison. She never gave me an unkind word in her life; and, if I ever lifted my finger against her, it was; it must have been when I was crazy with liquor.'—'You never did, George,' said Peggy Webber.—'Well, I am grateful,' continued her husband, 'that I have not that sin against me. However, it was bad enough. We got to be very poor, and I got to be very cross. When I was ill natured, Peggy used to cry; and when I was only melancholy, she used to come and sit down by me, and say all sorts of comforting things; and, whenever she thought it would do, she would urge me not to drink any more spirit. I lost all my custom, and we parted with the principal part of our furniture. Our house got to be full enough of misery, if it was emptied of every thing else. I could not pay my rent any longer, and our landlord began to talk pretty roughly, and threatened to turn us out. I heard there was a good chance for coopers at New Orleans, and asked Peggy if she was willing to go. She said yes, if I thought it the best course, but that she did not see why we might not get on here, as we used to. I told her we could stay here, and live on bread and water. She replied, that she should be truly happy to do so, if I would give up spirit; that she knew it made me poor and wretched, and that this made her so; and that she did not believe our misery would be lessened by a change of residence, but by a change of habit, which could be as well made here as any where else. I was not so degraded as not to feel the force of what Peggy said.

'My wife's father and mother were dead. There was a shrewd, honest, old Quaker, in our village,—you know who I mean, Parson Wheatly—old friend Boynton, as we call him—he was a very intimate friend of my wife's father, and took an interest in his children, and used to visit at Bailey's house and mine, till matters came to a very bad state. He was very fond of Peggy always. He advised her to persuade me to go and hear a temperance lecture. I went twice; and, though I had nothing to say against the lecturer, I couldn't help smiling to think how little he knew of the force of a tippler's habits. He seemed to think a drinking man could throw them off, as easily as he could his old shoes. I knew better, as I thought, for I had tried. I've promised Peggy a hundred times, when I went out in the morning, that I would not touch a drop, and I meant to keep my promise too, but I've come home drunk at night, for all that.

'At the time I was speaking of, when the landlord threatened to turn us out, and our best prospects were about as black as a thunder-cloud, Peggy urged me to make a visit to old friend Boynton, and ask his counsel. I felt rather awkward about it, for I had avoided the old gentleman of late; and, whenever I met him, I had put on a sort of swaggering gait, which a drunkard occasionally assumes to show his independence. I couldn't refuse Peggy's request, however; and, besides, I felt as though I'd give the world, if I had it, to be able to leave off; so I went to see the old Quaker.

'I made my visit in the morning, and that I might appear decent, I had not taken a dram since the forenoon of the preceding day. I found the old gentleman at home. He relieved me of all my awkward feelings, in an instant, by his kind treatment. 'Ah, friend Webber,' said he, 'I am glad to see thee; thee hast not made me a visit for a long time; how is Peggy, thy wife, and thy little one?'—'I told him they were tolerably well, and that Peggy had sent her respects to him.—'Peggy was always a good child,' said he, 'and she maketh thee a good help mate, friend Webber, doth she not?'—'A thousand times better than I deserve,' said I, 'as you well know, Mr. Boynton. If I did not know how kindly you feel to my poor wife, I couldn't have come as I have to ask you to help me.'—'And pray, friend Webber,' said the old man, 'what wouldst thee have me to do? Thy wife's father was my friend, when I was a boy, when the heart is like softened wax, and impressions are made deeply. There are people in the world, as thee well

knowest, friend Webber, whom it is hard to serve, but Peggy is not of that number, and if I can'—'I have not come a begging,' said I, interrupting him: 'I have not come to ask for money, meat, fire, or clothes; and yet I have come to ask you to assist me to pay off the heaviest debt that a man can owe to a fellow mortal.—'And pray what may be the nature of thy debt, friend Webber?' said the Quaker, evidently with a little distrust as to the condition of my mind, and the real object of my visit.—'I will tell you, sir,' said I. 'When I courted my wife, I made her fair promises, such as most men make on such occasions, to be kind to her, and do all things to make her happy. These promises I have broken. When I married her, she had a little property, which you, as her guardian, had considerably increased: this property I have squandered. She took me for a sober man, and I have proved a drunkard. I have abused her kindness and good nature, yet she has never given me a harsh word or an angry look. Many times, when I had provided nothing for dinner, and supposed her without a mouthful for herself and her children, she has sent little Eli to find me, and let me know that dinner was ready; and, when I have returned, not unfrequently from the grog-shop, I have found her, if not cheerful, always kind and glad to have me come home, for I have always loved her, however I have neglected my duty towards her and the children. Peggy, somehow or other, always found something for dinner, a few roasted potatoes or a dish of dandelions, and, after Eli got to be old enough to catch fish, which are plenty in the pond, we had no lack of them in their season. At such times, I have always felt heartily ashamed of myself, and have solemnly cowed, again and again, that I would never touch another drop of spirit. But the smell of it, or the sight of it, or the very thought of it, has crowded my good resolutions aside, and, in a day or two, I have returned home intoxicated. Now, sir, if I could only cure myself of this dreadful habit, I could be happy, and so would Peggy. If there was no spirit, I could earn money and keep it. But I feel unable to resist the temptation, that is to be found at every corner. Rum has ruined me. I have disappointed my customers so often, that I have lost them all. I have nothing to do, and Roby, our landlord, has warned me out. Peggy has been anxious that I should come and talk with you, and take your advice; though I don't see how that will be lik' to help me.'—'Thee talkest well and wisely, friend Webber,' said the Quaker: 'I have often grieved for thee and thine, and have long hoped, that thee wouldst come to reflect, as it seemeth thee has done, upon the fatal consequences of thy bad habit. I thank thee sincerely, friend Webber, for the confidence thee seemest to place in me, and thee shalt in no wise be the worse for it. Thee hast a just view of this matter, and thy feelings are right, and thee wishest heartily to reform; now why dost thee not put thy name to the temperance pledge? I was well pleased to see thee at the lecture about the middle of the fourth month.'—'Oh, sir,' said I, 'I cannot do that, for I should never be able to keep clear of the temptation: I should certainly break my word, and be worse off than I was before. I dare not trust myself, Mr. Boynton. I don't think I could leave off for any length of time, unless I was compelled to do so, in some way that I cannot foresee.'—'Verily,' said the Quaker, after a long pause, 'thy case is an interesting one, friend Webber, and I think better of thee, than if thee hadst a vain confidence in thyself and thy powers of resistance. I cannot advise thee to any course, until I have considered thy matter more fully. To-morrow will be the Sabbath: wilt thee call and see me again on the evening of the Monday following?'—'I will, sir,' said I. As I was rising to depart, the old gentleman took my hand, and holding it in both of his, looked me steadily in the face, with such an expression, as a kind father would bestow upon a child, whose welfare is very dear to him.—'Friend Webber,' said he, 'wilt thee oblige me in one thing?'—'Very gladly, sir,' said I, 'if it is in my power.'—'Well, then,' said he, 'as I wish thee to receive such counsel as I may give thee, in a profitable condition of mind, wilt thee promise me to forbear from tasting any intoxicating liquor till I see thee on Monday evening.'—'I'll give you my word and honor, sir,' said I, 'that I will not touch a drop.'—'And may the Lord help thee,' said the old man, as he pressed my hand with great earnestness.

'I felt better for my visit. I found that I had a friend, for Peggy's sake at least, who did not utterly despise me. I kept my word with the old gentleman, and knocked at his door on Monday evening, with something like the confidence of an honest man. He