

"This little incident, Eli," said my Uncle, looking over his glasses, "preaches a sermon on temperance. It teaches us all, in these times of public corruption, tempered by private assassinations, to keep our heads 'spiritoally level.'"

"How can this be done, Uncle?" I asked.

"Jes lis'en to me, Eli, and I'll tell you. I'll open the flood-gates of wisdom to you, so to speak." Then my uncle put one hand on my shoulder, looked me straight in the face, and said :

"Ef you drink wine, Eli, you will walk in winding ways; ef you carry too much beer the bier soon will carry you. Ef you drink brandy punches you will get handy punches; and ef you allers get the best of whiskey, Eli, whiskey 'll allers get the best of you."

"But brandy, Uncle—brandy has saved the lives of thousands of people—has n't it?" I asked.

"Yes, Eli, brandy has saved thousands of lives, and do you want to know how—do you? By their *not* drinking it, my boy; that's the way it saved their lives. No, my boy, if you want to keep your spirits up you mus'n't put your spirits down."

"Did you ever know brandy and whiskey to do as much damage as water has, Uncle?" I inquired, modestly.

"Yes, my boy, I have. What has brandy done in our fam'ly? Didn't I see your Uncle Nathaniel come home from the lodge one night, after he had taken too much whiskey in his water, an' didn't he stagger into the kitchen, get up on a chair and wash the face of the clock, and then deliberately get down and wind