

Idol down. Now there are, in that very body, a great many members who love the idol dearly; there are many who are sent thither expressly to keep the idol up. So you see that petitioning the legislature, such as it now is, to abolish the traffic in rum, is like petitioning the priests of Baal to pull down their false god. But you look pale and sad: has any new trouble come upon you, or do you find the old one more grievous to bear?" "Ah, sir," said this man of many woes, "we have had trouble enough, new and old, since you were here last. Intemperance must be a selfish vice, I am sure. About a fortnight ago, my wife contrived, while I was gone to the city to procure a few bars of iron, to sell our old cow to a drover; and this woman, once so kind-hearted and thoughtful of her children, would see them starve rather than deprive herself of the means of intoxication. She has been in liquor every day since. But all this is nothing compared with our other late trial. Last Monday night, I was obliged to be from home till a very late hour. I had a promise from a neighbour to sit up at my house till my return, to look after the children, and prevent the house from being set on fire. But the promise was forgotten. When I returned about eleven o'clock, all was quiet. I struck a light, and, finding my wife was in bed, and sound asleep, I looked round for the children. The four older children I readily found, but little Peter, our infant, about thirteen months old, I could find no where. After a careful search, I shook my wife by the shoulder to wake her up, that I might learn, if possible, what had become of the child. After some time, though evidently under the influence of liquor, I awakened this wretched woman, and made her understand me. She then made a sign that it was in the bed. I proceeded to examine, and found the poor suffering babe beneath her. She had pressed the life out of its little body. It was quite dead. It was but yesterday that I put it into the ground. If you can credit it, this miserable mother was so intoxicated that she could not follow it to the grave. What can a poor man do with such a burthen as this? The owner of the little tenement, in which I have lived, has given me notice to quit, because, he says, and reasonably enough too, that the chance of my wife's setting it on fire is growing greater every day. However, I feel that within me that promises a release before long, from all this insufferable misery. But what will become of my poor children!" Johnny sat down upon a bench, and burst into tears. His visitor, as we have said, was a kind-hearted man. "Suppose I should get some discreet person to talk with your wife," said he. Johnny raised his eyes and his hand at the same moment. "Talk with her!" he replied, "you may as well talk with a whirlwind; the abuse which she poured on me this morning for proposing to bring our good minister to talk with her, would have made your hair stand on end. No, I am heart-broken and undone for this world. I have no hope, save in a better, through the mercies of God. The visitor took the poor man by the hand, and silently departed. He uttered not a word; he was satisfied that nothing could be said to abate the domestic misery of poor Johnny Hodges in the present world; and there was something in his last words, and in the tone in which they were uttered, which assured the visitor that Johnny's unshaken confidence in the promises of God would not be disappointed in another.

How entirely inadequate is the most finished delineation to set forth, in true relief, the actual sum total of such misery as this! How little conception have all those painted male and female butterflies and moths, who stream along our public walks of a sunny morning, or flutter away their lives in our fashionable saloons;—how little conception have they of the real pressure of such practical wretchedness as this? To the interrogatory of poor Johnny Hodges, "Can nothing be done to put an end to the evils of intemperance?" what answer, here and hereafter, do those individuals propose to offer, who not only withhold their names from the temperance pledge, but who light up their castles: and call together the giddy and the gay of both sexes; and devote one apartment of their palaces, in the present condition of public sentiment, chastened and purified as it is, to the whiskey punch bowl!

The summer had passed, and the harvest was over. About four months after the interview, I heard, for the first time, the story of poor Johnny Hodges. Taking upon my tablets a particular direction to his house and shop, I put on my surtout, and set forth upon a clear, cold November morning, to pay the poor fellow a visit. It was not three miles from the city to his dwelling. By

the special direction which I had received, I readily identified the shop. The doors were closed, for it was a sharp, frosty morning. I wished to see the poor fellow at his forge before I disclosed the object of my visit. I opened the door. He was not there. The bellows were still. The last spark had gone out in the forge. The hammer and tongs were thrown together. Johnny's apron was lying carelessly upon the bench. And the iron, upon which he had been working, lay cold upon the anvil. I turned towards the little dwelling. That also had been abandoned. A short conversation with an elderly man, who proved to be a neighbour, soon put my doubts and uncertainties at rest. The conclusion of this painful little history may be told in a very few words. The wife, who, it appears, notwithstanding her gross intemperance, retained an inconsiderable portion of personal comeliness, when not abominably drunk, had run off, in company with a common soldier, abandoning her husband and children about three months before. Five days only before my visit, poor Johnny Hodges, having died of a broken heart, was committed to that peaceful grave, where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest. On the same day, four little children were received, after the funeral, as inmates of the poor-house.

"I have known them well, all their life-long," said the old man from whom I obtained the information. "The first four or five years of their married life, there was not a likelier, nor a thriftier, nor a happier couple in the village. Hodges was at his forge early and late; and his wife was a pattern of neatness and industry. But the poor woman was just as much poisoned with rum, as every man was with arsenic. It changed her nature, until, at last, it rendered her a perfect nuisance. Every body speaks a kind word of poor Hodges; and every body says that his wife killed him, and brought his children to the poor-house. This is a terrible curse to be sure. Pray, sir, 'can't something be done to put an end to the evils of intemperance?'" Such thought I, was the inquiry of poor Johnny Hodges. How long can the intelligent legislatures of our country conscientiously permit this inquiry to pass without a satisfactory reply? How many more wives shall be made the enemies of their own household; how many more children shall be made orphans; how many more men shall be converted into drunken paupers; before the power of the law shall be exerted to stay the plague? In the present condition of the world, while the legislature throws its fostering arm around this cruel occupation, how many there are who will have abundant cause to exclaim, like poor Johnny Hodges, from the bottom of their souls,—WHAT A CURSE! How many shall take as fair a departure for the voyage of life, and make shipwreck of all their earthly hopes in a similar manner! How many hearts, not guilty of presumptuous sins, but grateful for Heaven's blessing in some humble sphere, shall be turned, by such misery as this, into broken cisterns which can hold no earthly joy! How many husbands of drunken wives; how many wives of drunken husbands; how many miserable children, flying in terror from the walking corpses of inebriated parents, shall cry aloud, like poor Johnny Hodges, in the language of despair, WHAT A CURSE!

## MERCANTILE INDIGESTION.

*From Chambers' Edinburgh Journal.*

The following is a dialogue which took place at an interview between the late Dr. Gregory and a patient who applied for his advice:—

*Patient.* Good morning, Dr. Gregory; I'm just come in to Edinburgh about some law business, and I thought when I was here at any rate, I might just as well take your advice, sir, anent my trouble.

*Doctor.* And pray, what may your trouble be, my good sir?  
—*Pa.* 'Deed, doctor, I'm no very sure; but I'm thinking it's a kind of weakness, that maks me dizzy at times, and a kind of pinkling about my stomach—I'm just no right.

*Dr.* You're from the west country, I should suppose sir?  
—*Pa.* Yes, sir, from Glasgow.

*Dr.* Ay. Pray, sir, are you a gourmand—a glutton?—*Pa.* Oh, no, sir; I'm one of the plainest living men in all the west country.