

forget the doctor's kindness to me two years ago, when I had my dreadful fever; and if ever I can get so much money together, he shall certainly be paid. That fever was brought on partly by hard work, but the main spring of the matter was in the mind. My wife was then getting very bad, and when she was in liquor her language was both indecent and profane; though, when we were married, there wasn't a more modest girl in the parish. Just before my fever came on, in one of her fits of intemperance, she strolled away, and was gone three days and three nights; and, to this hour, I have never known where she was, all that time. It almost broke my heart. The doctor always said there was something upon my mind; but I never told him, nor any one else, the cause of my trouble till now. What a curse! Don't you think, sir, that something can be done to put an end to this terrible curse of intemperance?" "Your case is a very hard one," said the collector, after a solemn pause, "and I wish I could point out a remedy. You need give yourself no uneasiness about the doctor's bill, for I am sure he will think no more of it when I have told him your story. If it would not give you too much pain, and take up too much of your time, I should like to be informed a little more particularly of the commencement and progress of this habit in your wife, which seems to have destroyed your domestic happiness." Johnny Hodges wiped his brow, and sat down upon a bench in his shop, and the collector took a seat by his side.

"Eight years ago," said Johnny Hodges, "came the first day of next month, I was married. Polly Wilson, that was her maiden name, was twenty-three, and I was four years older. I certainly thought it the best days work I ever did, and I continued of that mind for about five years. Since then Heaven knows I have had reason to think otherwise; for, ever since, trouble has been about my path, and about my bed. About three years ago, my wife took to drink. I cannot tell how it happened; but she always said herself that the first drop of gin she ever drank, was upon a washing day, when an old Scotch woman persuaded her that it would keep the cold off her stomach. From that time the habit grew upon her very fast. She has told me an hundred times, in her sober moments, that she would give the world to leave it off, but that she could not for the life of her. So strong has been her desire to get liquor, that nothing was safe from her grasp. She has sold her children's Sabbath clothes and my own for rum. After I had gotten well of my fever I worked hard; and, at one time, had laid by nearly enough, as I supposed, to pay the doctor's bill. One day I had received a dollar for work, and went to my drawer to add it to the rest; and—all was gone! The drawer had been forced open. She knew that I had been saving the money to pay the doctor and the apothecary for their services during my fever; she knew that my sickness had been produced by sleepless nights and a broken heart on her account; yet she could not resist the temptation. She affirmed, in the most solemn manner, that she knew nothing about it; but two of the little children, in answer to my inquiry, told me that they had seen mamma break open the drawer, and take out the money; and that she went directly over to the grocery, and in about half an hour after she returned, went to sleep so soundly in her chair, that they could not wake her up to get a little supper. At that time I went to Mr. Calvin Leech, the grocer, and told him that I wondered, as he was a church member, how he could have the heart to ruin the peace of my family. He was very harsh, and told me that every man must take care of his own wife, and that it was not his business to look after mine. I began to think, with Job, that I would not live always. Strange fancies came into my head about that time, and I tried hard to think of some escape from such a world of sin and sorrow; but a kind and merciful God would not let me take my own wild way. I read my Bible; and the poor children kept all the while in my way smiling sweetly in my face, and driving all evil thoughts from my mind. My oldest boy was then about seven. 'Don't take on so, daddy,' the little fellow used to say when he found me shedding tears, 'don't cry, daddy; I shall be big enough to blow the bellows next year. I have tried to keep up for the sake of these poor children; and few would be better, for their years, if their mother did not teach some of them to curse and swear. They have the same bright look and gentle temper that my wife had when we were married. There never was a milder temper than Polly's before this curse fell upon the poor creature. Oh, sir, it is nothing but rum that has ruined our hopes of happiness in this world

How strange it is that nothing can be done to stay such a dreadful plague!"

The collector shook the poor blacksmith by the hand, and bade him keep up his spirits as well as he could, and put his trust in God's Providence. Promising to make him a friendly call, in the course a few days, he took his leave.

This interview with the blacksmith had caused his visitor to contemplate the subject of the temperance reform somewhat in a novel point of view. The importunate and frequently repeated interrogatory of Johnny Hodges, "Cannot something be done to put an end to the evils of intemperance?" to most individuals would appear to favor of gross ignorance in the Inquirer as to those amazing efforts which have already been made at home and abroad. But it must not be forgotten that poor Hodges was no theorizer in that department of domestic wretchedness which arises from intemperance. He was well aware that a prodigious effort had been made for the purification of the world by voluntary associations, adopting the pledge of total abstinence. He perfectly understood that all those who had subscribed such a pledge, and faithfully adhered to it, were safe from the effects of intemperance, in their own persons. Yet this poor fellow cried aloud, out of the very depths of his real misery, "Cannot something be done to put an end to the evils of intemperance?" His own bitter experience had taught him that there was one person who could never be prevailed upon to sign the pledge; one, upon whose faithful execution of her domestic duties, his whole earthly happiness depended; the partner of his bosom; the mother of his children; and she had become a loathsome and ungovernable drunkard. He rationally inferred, indeed he well knew the fact, from his own observation upon the surrounding neighbourhood, that such an occurrence was not of an uncommon character. Intemperate husbands, intemperate wives, and intemperate children were all around him. Johnny Hodges was a man of good common sense. He reasoned forward to the future from the past, he entertained no doubt that, notwithstanding the most energetic, voluntary efforts of all the societies upon the face of the earth, drunkenness would certainly continue in a greater or less degree, so long as the means of drunkenness were suffered to remain. The process of reasoning in Johnny's mind may be very easily described. So long, thought he, as rum-selling continues to be sanctioned by law, and grog-shops are legalized at every corner; so long as even deacons and church members distil rum and sell it, reducing the temperate drinker's noble to the drunkard's nine-pence, and that nine-pence to nothing and a jail; winning away the bread from the miserable tippler's children; and causing the husband and wife to hate and abhor the very presence of each other; so long a very considerable number of persons, who will not sign the pledge, will be annually converted from temperate men and women into drunken vagabonds and paupers. The question is therefore reduced to this: Can no effectual measures be provided by law to prevent a cold, calculating, unmercenary body of men from trafficking any longer in broken hopes, broken hearts, and broken constitutions; and to restrain, at least, deacons and church members, who pray to the Lord to lead them not into temptation, from laying snares along the highways and hedges of the land to entrap the feet of their fellow creatures, and tempt their weaker brethren to their ruin.

A month or more had passed away before the collector's business brought him again into the neighbourhood of the blacksmith's shop. Johnny Hodges was at work as usual. He appeared dejected and care-worn. His visitor shook him by the hand, and told him that the doctor said he should consider him, as old Boerhaave used to say, one of his best patients, for God would be his paymaster. "Never think of the debt any more, Johnny," said the collector. "The doctor has sent you his bill receipted; and he bade me tell you that if a little money would help you in your trouble, you should be heartily welcome to it." "Indeed," said the blacksmith, "the doctor is a kind friend; but I suppose nothing can be done to put an end to this curse?" "I fear there will not be at present," said the collector; "rum is the idol of the people. The friends of temperance have petitioned the legislature to pull this old

\* I have learned, since the preparation of this tale, from the collector himself, that Hodges expressed the liveliest gratitude for the doctor's kindness in relinquishing his claim for professional services; but that he persisted in refusing to receive a five-dollar note, which accompanied the receipted bill. "God will reward the doctor for all his kindness," said the poor fellow, "but I cannot take the money."