

## THE DANGEROUS FOUNTAIN.

Once upon a time, as a man was traveling along a dusty highway, he came to a bright fountain. "Good," said he. "I'll take a drink."

"No," said a voice at his side; "it is not good, it is very bad, do not touch it!"

The speaker was a plain countryman, with a kind, honest face. "What's wrong with the fountain?" asked the traveler; it looks good enough."

"It is a deadly poison," answered the countryman. "It does not kill at once, more's the pity; but it destroys you by degrees; soul first, and then the body."

"But why do you allow such a nuisance in your country?" asked the first, incredulously. "Alas!" replied the other, "there are more people bewitched by it than those who fear it."

"Tut tut," said the traveler, "I don't believe your bugaboo story; I shall try for myself, since you say it does not kill at once."

"Stop!" cried the countryman, as the stranger put his lips to the fountain. "Let me give you one more warning; even the first drink, if you take enough to satisfy thirst, will change you for a time into a beast."

The traveler laughed aloud. "Now I know you are lying," he said. "Off with you," and he stooped and drank.

But, sure enough, he found himself immediately changed into a pig, and obliged to root and grunt and wallow, after the manner of that beast. The effect of his draught soon passed away, and then he felt inclined to laugh at his experience, and even made a joke of it among his friends.

Some of them laughed with him; but the wiser ones shook their heads and advised him not to repeat his experiment.

Nor did he think of doing so, but his work now took him past the fountain every day, and every time he passed it, he felt more inclined to stop.

"Pshaw!" he said to himself, "it does not hurt a man to find out occasionally how a pig feels;" and he stopped and

drank, not once, but twice, and three times, and by and by every day, each time losing his own nature for that of a pig.

And the character of the beast seemed to grow fiercer as time went on; for, while he was a pig, the man would ravage gardens and do much damage, so that his neighbors began to hate and fear him.

His friends besought him to stay away from the fountain. Alas! now he could not; a raging thirst which nothing could allay drove him to the cursed waters, to drink more and more deeply.

And, lo! instead of a pig, he was presently turned into a wild boar, a terror to all. One fatal day, while he had on the nature of the fierce beast, he turned upon his wife and children and slew them, and afterwards died at the gallows, amidst howls of execration, as a murderer!

What does my dark little story mean? It means to show you in a glass the picture of one who tampers with strong drink, his folly, his on-coming helplessness, and the wretched end threatening him, that you, dear, clean, pure young folks may turn with horror from the first drink.—*Sel.*

## A PERSIAN LEGEND.

It is related that a Persian mother, on giving her son forty pieces of silver as his portion, made him swear never to tell a lie, and said: "Go, my son, I consign thee to God; and we shall not meet here again till the day of judgment."

The youth went away, and the party he traveled with were assaulted by robbers. One fellow asked the boy what he had, and he answered with a candor that surprised his questioner:

"Forty *dinars* are sewed up in my garments."

The robber laughed, thinking that the boy jested. Another asked him the same question and received the same answer. At last the chief called him and asked what he had. The boy replied:

"I have told two of your people, already, that I have forty *dinars* sewed up in my clothes."