

which answered the description, "that, I guess, must be the dwelling of my old friend Burley."

"I guess so, massa," said Sambo.

"You guess so," said Mr Atherton, with a smile, "what makes you guess so?"

"Oh, massa," returned the good-natured follower, "like massa, like man; massa guess so, Sambo guess so; and de poor old horse very tired."

"Well," said Mr Atherton, "I'll make the matter sure;" and riding up to a small shop, on the other side of the way, over whose door was the name of "Simeon Soder, Tinman."

"Pray, sir," said he to a little old man with spectacles, who was busily tinkering some article in his line, "will you inform me where I may find the house of Mr Thomas Burley?" This question he repeated three times before he obtained a reply. At length the tinman turned to him, with an air and expression, which seemed to say that time was money, and said, in a rapid manner,—"Sodering, sir,—couldn't leave the job—what's your will, sir?"

Mr Atherton put the enquiry again.

"Right opposite!" was the reply, and the old man was at it again before the last word was out of his mouth.

Mr Atherton dismounted, and giving his horse to old Sambo, knocked at the door. It was opened by Burley himself. So universal was the change, which twenty years had wrought in his appearance, that Mr Atherton did not recognize the friend of his youth, until he himself exclaimed, seizing his visitor by the hand, "God bless you, Atherton, how do you do? Come in my dear fellow, you have come in the nick of time; Mrs Burley is now making a bowl of punch." So saying, he dragged his old class-mate into the parlour, and introduced him to his wife:—"My old friend Atherton, my dear, of whom you have heard me speak so often."

Mrs Burley set down a case bottle of old Jamaica, a portion of which she had just poured into the punch bowl, and after receiving him very civilly, returned to her labours at the sideboard.

"My dear friend," said Mr Burley, "you cannot tell how glad I am to see you. Four lines you know, my dear."

"Oh, yes, I know," said Mrs Burley, in a voice of great complacency.

"Well now, Atherton," continued he, "tell us about your wife and children, how many have you?—half a dozen table spoonfuls of arrack, my love, to give it a flavour, you know."

"Dear me," said his partner, with no little petulance, "do you think I want to be directed after making your punch almost every day for the last ten years, when I have not been confined to my room with St. Anthony's fire?"

"Make it your own way, my love," said the prudent husband. "I assure you, Atherton, nobody can make it better. Her forte, however, is mulled wine."

This admirable housewife's composure appeared to be entirely restored by the well-timed compliment. The punch was compounded, and a brimming tumbler presented to Mr Atherton.

"You must excuse me," said he, "but my doctor has forbidden the use of all intoxicating drinks."

"Pray take a little, sir," said Mrs Burley, evidently mortified at his refusal.

"My dear fellow," said her husband, "it's my settled opinion, that your doctor, whoever he is, will be the death of you. Not take punch! What do you say to a little brandy and water?"

"Nothing of the kind, I thank you."

"You are very pale, sir," said Mrs Burley, as she took her glass, "I really think it would heighten your complexion." She certainly exhibited a striking illustration of

the truth of her opinion. She was short and corpulent, and her countenance was as round as a full moon in the primer.

Mr Atherton adhered to his resolution; and the punch was consumed by Mr Burley and his lady, with the exception of two small glasses which were put by for the "dear creatures," as Mrs Burley called them, on their return from school.

Mr Burley again questioned his friend about his wife and children; and learned that he had left four fine boys and their mother, in very good health, on his plantation. But Mr Atherton had become exceedingly solemnized by the scene around him; and the natural melancholy of his character had assumed an air of sadness, while contemplating the striking alteration in the appearance of his friend. At college he had been remarkable for his erect figure, clear complexion, and bright eye. He had now become extremely corpulent, with an infirm gait, and the stoop of old age. His eye had lost its lustre, and acquired that stupid and bloodshot appearance, which is so characteristic of an intemperate man. It told too plainly the story of its evil habits; and his bloated and eruptive countenance confirmed the disgraceful tale.

A loud shout at the gate announced the return of the two boys from school.

"Jim and Billy have got home," said Mrs Burley, and, going to the door, "Billy, dear, come in," said she.

"I won't," said Billy.

"Jim," said this judicious mother, "catch Billy, and fetch him in."

"I won't," said Jim.

"Dear me," said Mrs Burley, as she returned, "the spirits of these dear boys fairly run away with them. Here, dears," she continued, holding up the two glasses of punch! These young urchins, one about nine, and the other twelve years of age, came rushing up to the door, and the mother attempted to catch them by their manes, like a couple of colts. Jim escaped, breaking the tumbler on the door step, and upsetting the punch on his mother's gown. Billy was dragged into the room floundering and stamping. "Here is Mr Atherton, my love, your father's old friend, come and shake hands with the gentleman, Billy."

"I don't care—I won't—let me go," said the unruly young gentleman.

"Oh Billy, dear," said the mother, who was fairly out of breath, and let him escape, "you don't behave your best by any means."

"I never interfere," said Mr Burley, who had just taken up the ladle, habitually as it were, and put it down again, when he discovered that the bowl was empty; "I never interfere: for managing boys and making a bowl of punch, Mrs Burley has not her equal in the country."

The dinner hour at length arrived.

"You'll take a little brandy before dinner," said Mr Burley to his friend.

"No, I thank you," said Atherton.

"Well," said Burley, "I find I cannot do without it. A watery stomach, I think, cannot be corrected so readily in any other way. Wine does not agree with me at all: and though I can give you some tolerable brandy, or Hollands, or Jamaica, I am afraid we have scarcely a glass of wine that's worth your drinking."

"I never take it," said Mr Atherton.

"No wine!" said Mrs Burley, "you amaze me."

"Ha, ha, ha, you're a cold water man," cried her husband, as he put down his glass. "I can't go it. I must have brandy. But here's a little old fellow, right opposite, Soder the tinman, who drinks nothing but water. He's an active member of the tee-total society. That little skeleton and his son, who keeps another tin shop a little way down the street, with a set of fanatical hypocrites and orthodox rascals, if they could have their way, would solder up the