

the family were fearful he had been poisoned; and the more so, as he had been seen, in the earlier part of the day, playing before the apothecary's shop. Dr. Diver had recently procured a stomach-pump; and, as he was quite willing to try it, the experiment was immediately and successfully made, upon the stomach of little Dick, who was speedily relieved of rather more than half a pint of strong milk punch. He stoutly denied, with tears in his eyes, that he had ever tasted a drop of any such thing; but finally confessed, that he had been sucking tea, as he had often seen his mother do, from the nose of her teapot, upon the upper shelf. Farmer Wild in spite of his wife's remonstrances, took down the teapot, and examined its contents, when the whole matter was easily unravelled. The farmer scolded his wife, for her habit of drinking punch in the morning; and she scolded her husband, for his habit of drinking rum, at all hours of the day. The presence of Dr. Diver appeared to have little influence, in abating the violence or softening the acrimony of the family quarrel; and little Dick was quite willing to be spared, by both parents, though at the expense of a broil between themselves. As soon as Dr. Diver had carefully wiped and put up his stomach-pump, he took his leave, cautioning little Dick to avoid taking his tea so strong for the future. The doctor was not only a skilful physician but a prudent man. It is fortunate for the peace of every village in the land, that doctors are generally aware, that the acquisition of extensive practice depends, in no small degree, upon their ability to hear, see, and say nothing.

It need not be stated, that farmer Wild and his wife were getting into a bad way, and that Richard was not likely to be benefited by the example of his parents. Pride will frequently operate when all higher and holier motive will not. Vicious inclinations are often restrained, in the presence of those, whom we fancy ignorant of our besetting sins. Thus it was with farmer Wild and his wife. The domestic explosion, produced by the affair of the teapot, had completely broken the ice, as it were; and, from that moment, neither the husband nor the wife adopted any private courses, for the gratification of their appetite for liquor. The farmer used gin, and rum was the favorite beverage of his wife. Their respective jugs were regularly carried by little Dick, and brought home filled, from the grog-shop. Dicky always calculated on the sugar, at the bottom of his father's glass; and his mother never failed to reward him with a taste of her own, if he went and came quick with the jug. Richard, who knew nothing of the evil consequences of drinking spirit, saving from his experience with the stomach-pump, had offered, more than once, a portion of that, which he had received from his parents, to Robert Little, who always refused it, and told Richard that it was wrong to drink it. But Richard replied, that his father and mother drank it every day, and therefore it could not be wrong. "Besides," said he, "father and mother are always so good-natured and funny when they drink it; and, after a while, they get cross and scold, and when they drink it again, they fall asleep, and it's all over." Robert, as good little boys are apt to do, told his father and mother all that Richard had said to him. Mr. Little had observed for some time, that farmer Wild was neglecting his farm, and getting behind hand; and, after talking the matter over with his own good wife, he came to the conclusion, that it was his duty to seek a fair opportunity, and have a friendly and earnest conversation with his old neighbour, on the fatal tendency of his habits of life. "I shall have relieved my mind, and done my duty to an old friend," said he, "if my efforts should produce no good." He availed himself accordingly of the first fair occasion, which presented itself on the following Sabbath, after meeting. His counsel was of no avail; and he was grieved to find, by an increased violence of manner, and an apparent regardlessness of public opinion, that his poor neighbor Wild was farther gone than he had supposed. His irritability of temper had sadly increased, and Mr. Little was shocked to find, that he could not converse on the subject, without using profane and violent language. The next morning he sent in a few shillings, which he owed Mr. Little, with a short message by Richard, that he believed they were now even. Robert came in, shortly after, weeping bitterly, and saying that Richard's father had forbidden their playing or even speaking together any more, and had threatened to flog Richard soundly, if he dared to disobey. However painful to Robert, Mr. Little did not consider this prohibition so great an evil. Richard Wild, though of a very affectionate temper, under the influence of his father and mother was becoming a bad boy.

He was not over nine years of age, and had already acquired the name of the little tippler; and had been suspected, upon more than one occasion, of being light-fingered. Farmer Little's wife, however, could never speak of those early days, when Richard used to bring his dipper of milk, and sit upon the rock with Robert, at the bottom of the garden, without putting her apron to her eyes. Robert would often look wistfully at Richard, as he passed, and nod to him through the window; and Richard would return it in the same manner, after he had satisfied himself that neither his father nor mother was observing him. Dick, with all his fallings, was a generous boy. A portion of his apples and nuts was frequently seen, in the morning, under Robert's window, where he had placed them over night, not daring to venture over in the day time. Nevertheless, he was becoming daily an object of increasing dislike, through the whole village. Although there were some who pitied the poor boy, and thought his parents much more to blame, through whose example he had undoubtedly acquired that ruinous relish for ardent spirit; yet the villagers generally considered the whole family as a nuisance, and likely, before long, to come upon the town. Squire Hawk, the chairman of the selectmen, who kept the grog-shop in front of the meeting-house, concluding that farmer Wild was completely down at heel, and had no more money, refused to let him have any more liquor at his store, and proposed to post him, as a common drunkard. But Deacon Squeak, who kept the dram-shop at the corner of the road that leads to the grave yard, knew something more of poor Wild's affairs, and observed, that it would be hard to do so, on account of his family; he knew from his own experience, that a little liquor was, now and then, a help to any man. It was soon known over the village, that farmer Wild had conveyed the last remnant of his little property, a small piece of meadow land, to Deacon Squeak, to be paid for in groceries, at his store. Poor Wild, with the assistance of his wife and little Dick, soon drank out the meadow land. The Deacon himself was then perfectly satisfied, that it was a gone case. Richard Wild and Temperance Wild, his wife, were forthwith posted as common drunkards; and all persons "of sober lives and conversations," who sold rum in the village of Tiptletown, were forbidden to furnish them with ardent spirits any longer. The means of subsistence were now entirely gone, and their removal to the workhouse was a matter of course. It was haying time, and little Dick was permitted to earn his virtuals, by helping the hay-makers. They soon detected him in getting behind the hay-cocks, and drinking the rum from their jugs; and accordingly little Dick got a sound thrashing, and was driven out of the field; for these hay-makers were so far inclined to promote the cause of temperance, that they would not permit any persons, but themselves, to dring up their rum.

Poor Dick! he cut a wretched figure, as he went whimpering along the road, rubbing his red eyes upon his ragged sleeves. He spent that day in strolling about farmer Little's woodland and orchard, in the hope of meeting Robert. But he was unsuccessful; and, at night, he went, crying and supperless, to bed, in the farmer's barn. He slid down from the hay-mow, before daylight, and resolved to quit a place, where he had neither father, nor mother, nor friend, to whom he could look for protection and support. The day was just dawning, as he came out of the barn: his path lay close to the cottage of farmer Little; he laid a small parcel on the door stone, and passed rapidly on. The parcel was found there, by the first person, who came out in the morning: it was a top, which Robert had lent him a great while before. It was rapped up in a piece of paper, on the corner of which was written, "Good bye, Robert." Before he quitted the village, Dick turned aside, for a moment, to give a last look at his father's cottage. It was untenanted, and the person, into whose hands it had fallen, had barred up the doors and windows, so that Dick could not get in; but, through a broken pane, he looked into the vacant room, where he had passed so much of his short life. He looked over the wall of the little garden, now filled with weeds. As he was turning away, he felt something move against his leg, and, looking down, he saw the old cat, that still clung to her accustomed haunts. She purred to and fro at his feet, and looked up in his face. Poor Dick was certain she knew him, and he burst into tears. She followed him a little way up the lane, and then returned slowly to the cottage.

"It was a bonny day in June," as the poet says, but the darkest in the short pilgrimage of little Dick. The birds sang delightfully,