

Harry bore this exceedingly well ; for the love of his wife came to the aid of his natural good temper. He locked up the flute. But he was disappointed in expecting Martha would offer him any substitute for his favorite amusement after his hours of labour. Her notions were those of rigid and unsparing industry. She was never tired of her domestic occupations, and she could not understand how a man who had his living to get could ever tire in the pursuit of his calling. When the hour of work was over, Harry sat down in his little parlour,—but his wife was seldom with him. It was true that the boards of his house were cleaner than the flour of any of his neighbours ;—that the saucepans of his kitchen shone with a brightness which all the good housewives of the parish envied ;—and that not a cinder deformed the neatness of his hearth without calling forth the brush and the shovel for its instant removal. But then it was also true that he sometimes caught cold at his dinner hour, from the wetness which the floor acquired from the indefatigable cleanliness of his mate ; that he sometimes made a fatal error when he forgot to clean his shoes before he crossed the sanded threshold ; He was debarred, too, of his favourite flute ; and it cannot then be wondered that he sometimes said in his heart, “Why did I marry ?”

It was at this juncture that Harry met with an old companion who had something of the vivacity but nothing of the goodness which he himself possessed. Harry appeared uneasy and dispirited ;—the cause of his discomfort was at length communicated. His companion told him with the common cant of libertines, that the way to make wives amiable was to neglect them ;—that his home was uncomfortable because he appeared too fond of it ;—and that he might find society where his merits would be properly rated. Harry was persuaded to fetch his flute, to spend the evening at a neighbouring ale-house.

The harmless vanity which had been so long pent up now broke forth beyond its natural boundaries. Harry played well, and he played till a late hour for he was flattered and carressed. On his return home, Martha was angry, and he was sullen.

The next night brought with it the same temptation. What was intended to be a rare indulgence at length became a confirmed habit. The public-house could not be frequented without expense ; and late hours could not be kept without diminishing the capacity for the performance of ordinary duties. Harry, too, acquired the practice of drinking freely ; and, as his mind was ill at ease, the morning draught often succeeded the evening's intoxication. He was not ; as before, seen constantly at his workshop, to receive orders with good temper, and to execute them with alacrity. He was not distinguished for the brightest shoes and the cleanest apron of any mechanic in the town : his habits were idle, and his garb was slovenly. He slunk away from public observation to bury himself in the haunts of drunkenness and profligacy. As his business failed, he made to himself pretences for employment in vagabond parties of anglers or lark-shooters. One by one every article of furniture was pawned for present support. The fatal flute was the last thing consigned to the grasp of the money-lender.

Martha did not want sense. She reflected deeply upon the causes of their misery ; and she at length perceived the error which she had committed in opposing her own fixed habits to the equally confirmed inclinations of her husband. She took her resolution. Honestly and impartially she stated her distresses, and the cause of them, to the vicar of the parish. He was a pious, a sensible, and a charitable pastor. He pointed out to her, what she herself at length acknowledged, that a small portion of time devoted to an innocent amusement is not incompatible with the more serious duties of a citizen and a christian ; that the en-