

The young man had hardly uttered the words, when the promised change was effected in the rich *bourgeois*, and Otto at the same moment found himself blind of one eye. He felt at first somewhat dismayed; but soon consoled himself for the loss by remembering that his remaining eye sufficed to give him the enjoyment of witnessing the misery of his enemy.

In the meanwhile, the party continued to walk for several hours without seeing any end to the gloomy forest. The road each moment became more rugged and hilly. Otto, who was beginning to feel somewhat fatigued, looked with a longing eye upon the chariot in which the youngest of the females lay half reclining at her ease. It was so ingeniously constructed that the deepest ruts hardly gave it more than a gentle swing. "All roads must appear short and good in this chariot," said he, approaching with a wistful look. "I would give a great deal to have one like it."

"Is that all you want," rejoined the second companion. "I can satisfy your desire in a moment."

She then struck with her foot the chariot that bore her, which seemed suddenly to unfold itself, and a second chariot of exactly the same easy and graceful proportions, and drawn by two fine bullocks, presented itself to his astonished view.

When he had somewhat recovered from his amazement he thanked the young girl, and was about to step into his newly acquired vehicle, when she motioned him to stop.

"I have fulfilled your desire," said she, "but I do not intend to make a worse bargain my sister. You gave her one of your eyes, I require one of your arms."

Otto was at first somewhat disconcerted by this request; but he was beginning to feel very weary, and the chariot seemed waiting most invitingly to receive him. As I told you before, he had never accustomed himself to resist the impulse of the moment, so after a little hesitation he agreed to the bargain, and found himself seated in his new equipage, but at the same time deprived of his right arm.

They now proceeded for some time on their journey without interruption. The forest seemed to stretch itself out to an interminable length. Otto soon began to feel the cravings of hunger and thirst, which was perceived by the old woman in rags.

"You are becoming gloomy, my lad," said she. "When the stomach is empty, discouragement is not far distant; but I possess a sure remedy against want and despair."

"What is it?" inquired the young man.

"You see this flagon, which I often carry to my lips," she replied. "It contains forgetfulness of pain, joy, and the brightest visions of hope. Whoever drinks of it becomes happy; and I will not drive you with a harder bargain than my sisters. I only require in exchange one half of your brain."

This time Otto rejected the offer. He began to feel a sort of terror at the successive bargains. But he was persuaded to taste the liquor contained in the flagon, and having once done so, it appeared to him so delicious that his resolution gave way, and he acceded to the bargain.

The promised effect was not long in making itself felt. Scarcely had he quaffed the tempting beverage, than he found his strength revive, his heart became joyous, and full of confidence. And when he had sung all the songs he could remember, he fell quickly asleep in his chariot, perfectly indifferent as to what might become of him.

When he awoke his three companions had disappeared, and he found himself alone at the entrance of the village. He attempted to rise, but one side of his body seemed paralyzed. He tried to look about him, but the one eye which now alone remained to him, was dim and uncertain. He tried to speak, but his tongue faltered and his ideas were confused. Now he began to realize how great were the sacrifices to which he had so slightly consented. His three fellow travellers had degraded him from the level of humanity. A crippled idiot, no other resource remained to him, than to beg his daily bread from door to door during the remainder of his days.

Here the old man ceased. Andrew struck with his fist on the table, and burst into a noisy laugh. "Indeed!" said he, "I think your friend Otto was a fool, father Solomon, and that he only got what he deserved. As to his three companions, they were thorough sharpers, whose names I should be glad to know, that I may take care to avoid them."

"It is easy to tell you that," said the narrator of the tale, "for their names are known to all. The name of the woman with the javelin is *Hatred*. That of the young girl reclining in the chariot, is *Sloth*. That of the old woman with the flagon, is *Intemperance*."

"Well, I can quite understand when one has to deal with such customers, one gets the worst of the bargain," replied the young miller. "Still, I abide by my old opinion, Otto deserved no better."

"Alas!" replied the old man, gravely; "I know some other people in the world who are no wiser than he was. What should you say, for instance, to a lad, who for the sake of running his master with whom he had quarrelled, exposes himself to the misfortune of being without employment? Do you think he is blest with full sight? or has he not rather sold one of his eyes to *Hatred*? Add to this, that he wishes to give himself what he calls a merry time of it,—that is to say, to taste the pleasures of idleness, without reflecting that he was once accustomed to labor, and enervated by idleness, he will find it not easy to regain the use of the two stout arms which in former days constituted his wealth. Finally, to console himself for his vexations, he has already lost one half his senses at the tavern, and will, before long be deprived altogether of the use of them. If Otto was a fool, what opinion can Andrew have of one who is imitating his example?"

The group began to laugh. Andrew alone remained grave and silent. He no longer sought to detain father Solomon, but suffered him to depart without even saying farewell. The lesson had evidently wounded him, as lessons which reach the conscience generally do. But such counsels are often like those bitter draughts which at first are not only distasteful to the palate, but seem even to increase our malady, yet afterwards they prove a means of restoring us to health.

Andrew reflected all night upon the history of Otto, and the following morning returned to the Mill, where he resumed the duties which he ought never to have abandoned.

A BEAUTIFUL IDEA.

Away among the Alleghenies there is a spring, so small that a single ox could drink it dry on a summer's day. It steals its unobtrusive way among the hills till it spreads out into the beautiful Ohio. Thence it stretches away a thousand miles, leaving on its banks more than a hundred villages and cities, and many thousand cultivated farms, bearing on its bosom more than half a thousand steamboats. Then joining the Mississippi stretches away some twelve hundred miles more, until it falls into the great emblem of eternity. It is one of the great tributaries of the ocean, which obedient only to God, shall roar and roar till the angel, with one foot on the sea and the other on the land, shall lift up his hand to heaven and swear that time shall be no longer. So with moral influence. It is a rill, a rivulet, an ocean boundless, and fathomless as eternity.