

desperately, he was soon hurled into the road, and the door barred against him.

Homeward the degraded man soon after turned his steps. Homeward! Had he a home? Reader, ten years have elapsed since you heard his mellow tones swelling upwards on the evening air in heart gushing thankfulness for the possession of a house. He was a man, then. A noble-minded, unselfish, love-inspired man, into whose arms, and upon whose bosom, were folded household treasures more prized than all worldly wealth or honors. You saw the vine and flower wreathed cottage nestling beneath the old elms, where a joyful reunion took place after a brief absence. You entered, gazed upon a happy group within, and called that home an earthly paradise.

Go home with Henry Erskine again. Only ten brief years have passed. Is he still in the cottage under the elms? No, no, reader. You will not find him there. Long, long ago, his wife and children passed weeping from its door. But yonder, in that old, dingy hovel, the windows shattered, the little enclosures broken down, and every sign of vegetation, except rank weeds, gone—there you will find the miserable family of Henry Erskine. Ah! no less changed are they. You will look in vain on their countenance for signs of gentle, loving affections. In the fall of him to whom they clung they have also fallen, not in the debasing slough of sensuality, where he lies prostrate and almost powerless, but evil affections have gradually prevailed, until the garden of their minds is overrun with thorns and briars.

You enter the wretched habitation. Surely there must be some mistake! In twice ten years a transformation such as this could hardly have been wrought. The sharp-featured and hollow-eyed woman who sits idle and brooding there, as if all hope in life had faded, cannot be the once glad-hearted Mrs. Erskine of "Elm Cottage." These hungry, miserable clad, prematurely old looking—are they the same we saw in the pleasant home, so gay and clad with their happy father? It is incredible. This cannot be the home of a man. Alas, no! It is the abode of a demon. And, see! he enters now the dwelling accursed by his presence. Not as a man comes he with blessings to the beloved inmates, but as a demon, scattering curses. The mother starts up, the children shriek away—all feel the shadow that rests upon their spirits grow darker.

From some cause the wretched being is in an unwonted state of excitement. There is something fearful to look upon his face—a demoniac expression that appeals. He is angry with himself—angry with everybody. In his heart is a fierce desire to commit violence.

"Ha! what are you doing here?" he cries, on discovering that his eldest boy is in the room. "Why have you come home?"

The frightened lad stammers out something about having offended his master, and being turned away from his place. Really innocent of any deliberate fault is the boy. He is not the wronger, but the wronged. He has tried to please a hard, exciting master, but failed in the earnest effort. All this the mother comprehends. But the insane father takes everything for granted against his son. Seizing him cruelly by the hair, he strikes him with his clenched fist, and assails

him with curses. Maddened at the sight, the mother seizes a heavy stick, and, with a single blow, paralyzes the arm of her husband.

She might have spared the blow. Even as it was descending, the hand that clutched the hair of the boy was unloosing its grasp, and a paralyzing terror seizing the heart of the wretched drunkard. What has fixed his eyes? Why do they start thus, almost from their sockets? Is a lion in the door? Some appalling destruction at hand? Now he has sprung to his feet—an ashy pallor on his disfigured countenance—and both hands are rising to keep off some object that he sees approaching. You see nothing. No—your eyes are not opened; and pray to heaven they never may be as his are at this awful moment. But, as real to him as the open door itself, entering through that door, and approaching him nearer and nearer is the horrible form of a serpent, bearing upwards the head of a man. In the face all malignant passions are in vivid play. Nearer and nearer it comes—nearer and nearer!—Backwards the frightened wretch shrinks, almost belching with terror, until he crouches in a far corner of the room, both hands raised to keep off the monster that still approaches. Now, the serpent is on him! Now, its cold, slimy body is wreathing neck and limbs! O, that yell of horror! Will it ever be done ringing in your ears? It was as the last cry of a lost demon!

Come! come away! It is too horrible. We cannot endure the sight. There, shut the door—hide from all eyes but those of the wretched inmates, the appalling terrors of that room.

You breathe more freely—yes—but enough has been seen and heard to make you sad for days, to make you thoughtful at times for life.

O, what a work! The transformation of a man into a demon! And what, on this beautiful earth, has power to effect so fearful a transformation? Is the fatal secret known? Do fathers, husbands, councilmen, legislators, statesmen, know in what the terrible power lies? Ah, strange, yet true, and sad to tell, the monster whose breath poisons, whose touch blights every leaf of virtue, stalks daily abroad, his name emblazoned on his forehead. And stranger far than this—councilmen and legislators, in nearly every State, take bribes from this monster for the privilege of working these fearful transformations. They sell for money—(can it be believed?)—yes, they sell for money the right to curse the hearths and homes of their fellow men, to scatter destruction to souls and bodies, over the length and breadth of the land!

You have seen one man transformed to a demon! It is the history of thousands and tens of thousands. All around you are in progress, like transformations. When, when will this work cease?—When will the master of destruction be bound?

Man, husband, father, citizen, sleep no longer! Up! arouse yourself. There is a terrible enemy abroad. Come up bravely, resolutely to the battle, and lay not off your armor until the victory is won. Fear not, falter not. All the powers of Heaven are on your side, and if you fight on bravely, you will conquer at last. God speed the day of victory.

THE IRRITABLE MAN.—Hood gives a graphic picture of an irritable man thus:—"He lies like a hedgehog rolled up the wrong way, tormenting himself with his prickles."