

realize that he might yet live to commit the bone of his bone and the flesh of his flesh, his first-born and favorite child, to the drunkard's grave.

His grief completely overwhelmed him.—“I can pity you, and weep for you, my poor friend,” said the benevolent pastor, as the tears came into his eyes.—“Ah sir,” exclaimed the unhappy father, “you know not how often and how earnestly I have set before this boy of mine the hateful picture of a drunkard. It is true I have indulged him in the temperate use of a little spirit, now and then, for the reasons I have mentioned; but I have always cautioned him to be careful in the use of it. Alas, my dear sir, I now see that I have committed a sad mistake. But what is to be done to save my poor child from destruction?”—“That,” Parson Moody replied, “is not only a most important, but I fear a most difficult question. Prevention is a simple thing; remedy is often a very complicated and uncertain process. You have certainly, as you say, committed a sad mistake. If the paths of intemperance are indeed the gates of hell and the chambers of death, you have acted rashly, my unhappy friend, in permitting your son to enter even but a little way. To be sure, you have cautioned him not to become a drunkard, but have you not pushed your child a little way over a terrible precipice, while you raised your warning voice to save him from falling into the gulf below? Have you not encouraged him to set fire to a powder magazine, and cautioned him to burn but a very little? I would not harrow up your feelings; but you have another son;—your responsibilities to God are very great; and so are mine, as your spiritual guide. It is possible I have already neglected my duty in withholding that counsel which I now earnestly give you, as a friend, and as a minister of the gospel;—for the sake of your poor children, for the sake of society, for your own sake, my dear sir, I conjure you to abandon the use of ardent spirit, in all its forms.”

During this solemn and touching appeal, Mr. Sharp paced the room in great agitation of mind: at its conclusion, he grasped the hand of his reverend friend, and exclaimed, in a voice inarticulate for grief—“Not a drop, my worthy friend, not a drop of intoxicating drink shall enter my habitation, nor pass my lips, from this, the most miserable hour of my life.”—“Amen,” said the holy man, “and may God grant it may be the most profitable hour of your existence.”

After a short pause, “I hope,” said Parson Moody, “to see the day when you will be one of the most active and influential members of our temperance society.”—“In regard to that,” replied Mr. Sharp, “I can give you no encouragement whatever. I have thought upon the subject, and read some of their books, but I have come to the conclusion, that this temperance reformation, as they call it, is nothing but a *sectarian thing*.”—“And pray, my worthy friend,” said the minister, with a smile, in which solemnity and sorrow prevailed, “what do you understand by a *sectarian thing*?”—“A *sectarian thing*,” said Mr. Sharp, “why I consider a *sectarian thing* to be a—I don't know that I can exactly explain my meaning, but a *sectarian thing* is, I suppose, a—”—“Well, well,” said Parson Moody, looking at his watch, “I perceive I have already overstaid an engagement. I will call this afternoon, for the purpose of continuing our conversation.”—He took Mr. Sharp affectionately by the hand, and departed; leaving him in perfect astonishment at his own entire ignorance of a term which he had so frequently and so confidently employed.

The petty mortification, arising from this circumstance, was immediately lost in the contemplation of that deep domestic affliction which seemed to be drawing nigh.

Mr. Sharp left the apartment to go in pursuit of Aminadab. He found, upon inquiry, that the boy was seen going that morning in the direction of the school-house: and he re-

solved to wait for his return at the dinner hour. He then sought the apartment of Mrs. Sharp, whom he found engaged in the instruction of little Joel. Upon the first communication of this sad news the tears came into her eyes; but she soon wiped them away and turning to her husband, “I have shed these tears,” said she, “because I cannot see you weep alone; as for that poor boy, he has had more already than his share of my tears and sighs. It has been for a long time the daily burthen of my prayers to God, that he would support us both under this impending calamity, for I have expected it from the beginning. It was evident to me long since that Aminadab had acquired a fatal relish for spirits. What could I do? I would not reproach you, my dear husband, but when I have seen him so far the worse for liquor as to be insolent and disrespectful, and have told him that rum would make him a drunkard; he would reply, ‘Father drinks it three or four times a day, will rum make father a drunkard?’ When I have said to him that he ought to give it up and drink water only, he always replied with a sneer, ‘Water is a *sectarian thing*, and father says so.’”—“Martha,” said Mr. Sharp, “I have declared before our minister and before God, and I now say it before you, not another drop of intoxicating drink shall enter my habitation nor pass my lips. If I have been the means of ruining my poor boy, may God of his infinite mercy forgive me: we have another child, *who shall never appeal to his father for a justification of his intemperance.*” Mrs. Sharp was greatly affected, and shed many happy tears at this joyful resolution of her husband. There is something contagious in such matters, even with those who are scarcely able to comprehend the moving cause; little Joel rose from his cricket, and putting down his book, reached up to kiss both his parents, with his eyes full of tears.

When the dinner hour arrived, as Aminadab did not return, a message was sent to Master Lane, who stated that the boy had not been at school for more than a week; that his previous absences had been very frequent; and had been passed over, upon his statement that he had been employed in his father's store.—This intelligence was not likely to abate the anxiety of these unhappy parents. They sat down to their meal in silence and in sorrow.

The table had scarcely been removed, when, according to his promise, the good minister entered their dwelling. Mr. Sharp acquainted him with Aminadab's conduct, at Master Lane's school, and that he had not returned since the morning. It was supposed however that conscious of his detection, he was strolling somewhere in the village, and would not come back until bed-time.

“Now my friend,” said Parson Moody, as soon as Mrs. Sharp had retired, and left her husband and the clergyman together; “if we can strengthen our good resolutions for the future, by an examination of our past errors, and a calm contemplation of all that we have lost, however painful the task, it is one of the most profitable exercises in which we can engage. Suppose you had long been a member of the temperance society, and as zealous in promoting its important concerns as you ever have been in the prosecution of your ordinary undertakings, you would, in such a case, neither have partaken of intoxicating drinks, nor have had them in your house; is it not altogether probable that you would have been spared that affliction which now wrings your bosom? You have one child to preserve, and another, if it be possible, to reclaim; you have resolved to abandon the use of such drinks. This is well. Why have you done this? Have you been actuated by any religious, moral, or philanthropic motive? Not at all. You have been moved by a selfish regard to your own fireside, your own domestic welfare alone. I urge you, as a man of good feeling, as a philanthropist, to reflect, that you owe something to your fellow creature. Mr. Sharp, your influence is great, for good or for evil. Justifying their conduct by your example,