

the whole of his parish, he was admired as a man of genius and eloquence, he was respected as a man of irreproachable moral worth, and beloved as a friend, who shared sincerely in the gladness, and sympathized in the sorrows of his flock. Unfortunately, the habits of many of his parishioners, as well as of those of the literary club to which I have alluded, were the very reverse of temperate. For a time the attraction of his young wife, and presently that of his infant son, kept him from indulging in nocturnal potations. But afterwards these attractions lost their force; the glory and the glee of the musical and literary conclave overcame all his resolves; and, night after night, it happened that he returned to his manse at unseasonable hours, and greeted his wife with the leer of intoxication, instead of the steady glance of affection. We should have said that, before this, old David Riddle, moved by his sons' entreaties, had given up his duties among the hills, and had come to live with him at Moskirk Manse. A weekly daylight was it to the old man to behold his son arrayed in his black gown, and with the smooth white bands drooping decently upon his bosom, delivering from the pulpit of his native parish the words of eternal truth; and pleasant was it to the old shepherd ever and anon to recognise, in the elegant but simple language of the pastor, some of those sentiments which he himself had instilled into his mind, while he was yet a shepherd lad upon the moorlands. But it could not long be concealed from him that William was irregular in his habits. When the fact first struck him, he almost swooned away; for the forebodings of Rachel rushed into his mind, and he saw as it seemed for the first time that his son's destruction, was sealed.

It was long, however, before he could bring himself to speak on the subject to William; he felt the shame which his son appeared to have abandoned; and his own temperate blood sent a blush into his withered cheek, at the idea of addressing the child of his heart, the minister of God, on the subject of his intemperance. The miserable struggles of the old man, before he gave utterance to his sentiments to William, we are utterly unable to describe—we leave them to our readers' imagination. At length, however, on a morning after the minister of Moskirk had shamefully been supported home by two of his parishioners, in a state of deplorable intoxication, the old shepherd gathered up resolution to speak to his son. He did not denounce, insult, or even upbraid him; but, with tears in his eyes, delicately alluding to his misconduct, assured him that such another occurrence would cause him to leave the manse for ever; for that, though he might not be able to prevent, he was resolved never to sanction the fearful immorality which drunkenness carries in its train, more hideous still when attached to a minister of the gospel.

William, already disgusted with himself, and humbled before his own heart, was crushed to the earth by his old father's appeal. He threw himself upon his aged parent's neck, and entreated his forgiveness. "My forgiveness, my boy!" replied the shepherd; "you cannot offend me, and therefore it is vain to ask for my forgiveness. My heart is so utterly bound up in thee, that, though it may deplore, it cannot denounce any conduct of thine. It is as it were but a servant of thine, and in good, or in evil report, will follow in its train. But, if my sufferings, and the sneers of men, have no influence over thee, think, O my dear boy! think on death, the judgment, eternity!"

Will it be believed, that, after this appeal, the remorse which he suffered, and the resolutions of reformation which he made, a single week saw the minister of Moskirk reel into his manse, assisted by the pastor of the Methodist chapel, at two o'clock in the morning? Such was the distressing reality; and the next morning, without speaking to his son, but giving, amid heart-broken sobs and sighs, his blessing to his daughter-in-law and her children, old David Riddle removed from his son's roof; nor could all his entreaties induce him to return.

Let me hasten to conclude. The conduct of William became so notoriously shameful, that it could no longer be overlooked by his parishioners, and he was more than once called by some of them with remonstrances, which increased gradually in severity. Still the infatuated man proceeded; until at length his behaviour became a public scandal to his own parishioners and to the whole church. He was yet, however, so much beloved for his generous warmth of heart, and admired for his talents, that a last effort was made to prevent the sentence of expulsion, which had been passed against him, from being carried into effect; and his punishment

was commuted, if so it could be called, into making a public apology, from his own pulpit, to his people, for his shameful irregularities. On the day of this heart-rending exhibition, not more than one-fourth of the congregation were present. But old David Riddle was there, supported, for the first, and alas! for the last time, into church by a friend. His form was now bent nearly double, he shuffled his feet painfully over the ground, his head shook from weakness, not from age; his eyes were red and dim—he looked like a man who was only three or four steps from the open grave. When, after the service was concluded, William began to read the humiliating apology which he had written, the aged shepherd crept painfully down upon his knees, and burying his face in his clasped hands, remained absorbed in prayer. The last words had fallen from the minister's lips; there was a dead stillness throughout the church, for all were penetrated with sorrow and shame at their pastor's disgrace, when a deep groan broke from the old shepherd and startled the congregation from the silence in which they were indulging. All eyes, and those of the minister among the rest, were instantly directed towards the old man; his frame remained for a moment in the attitude which we have described, and the next instant it fell heavily upon the floor—a corpse!

We shall not give pain to our readers, nor harrow up our own feelings, by attempting to describe the agony which this event caused William Riddle. It seemed to be one of those griefs which cannot and ought not to be outlived—a punishment greater than man is able to bear. So thought William—if the flash of this conviction across the settled gloom of his spirit could be called thought. How shall we go on? William, again, after severe struggles, gave way to the entreaties of some of his mistaken friends, and to the treacherous wishes of his own heart. He became a confirmed drunkard! He seemed to have at length cast behind him every thought of reverence for God and his holy vocation—every particle of respect for himself or his fellow-men. His poor young wife exhausted every argument which reason could afford—every blandishment with which affection and beauty could supply her, to reclaim him, but in vain. He retained, or seemed to retain, even, all the warmth of his first love for her, and, in his hours of intoxication, he seemed most strongly to acknowledge her worth and loveliness; but the necessity for the violent excitement of ardent spirits had overcome all other considerations. She wept long and bitterly; then, as despair began to close in upon her, she (dreadful that we should have it to relate!) sought, in the example of her husband, to escape from her sorrow! Ellen Ogilvie, the young, the graceful, the beautiful, the accomplished, the gentle, feminine creature, whose very frame seemed to shrink from the slightest coarseness in speech or action, became a drunkard!

Many years had passed away between the time when the old shepherd had preached in the church and the time to which we now refer, and William had a family of two sons and three daughters. If Ellen's father was unfavourable to her marriage at first, it will be easily imagined that he never now acknowledged them. His young family, therefore, had nothing to depend upon except their father's exertions, and they were about to be closed for ever.

The time arrived when it was impossible for William to be suffered any longer to remain in his charge. He was thrust out of his church and expelled from the ministry. The messenger who delivered this message to him, delivered it to one more dead than alive. His excesses had at length brought on a fit of apoplexy; he was but partially recovered from it, and could only, in a dim manner, comprehend the purport of the message, when with his wife and children, he was removed from the manse. A friend sheltered him for a time—afterwards, he was conveyed over to Edinburgh. Within a twelvemonth he died, having been chained down to bed by his disease, one half of his frame being dead, with mind enough to see poverty and inevitable misery ready to crush his helpless family, but without the power to use the slightest exertion in order to avert the impending calamity. It was in a garret in the High Street, upon rotten straw, the spectacle of an emaciated and shattered wife before his eyes, and the cries of his starving children sounding in his ears, that William Riddle breathed his last! What availed it then that he had been good and pure, full of generous sentiments, endowed with a graceful person, a noble genius, and a manly eloquence?—these otherwise invaluable qualities had been all sunk or scattered by the spendthrift extravagance of the Social Man.