

intimate with none, and so shut themselves out from the world as soon to be known to all as the Hermits.

Why such a man should have chosen to bury himself in the wilderness, was hard to be accounted for, and gave rise to many a curious conjecture. Some said he was a political offender, some a criminal, hiding from justice, some one thing and some another; but perhaps the most generally received opinion was, that he had been disappointed in love, and, rather than cross the path of his successful rival, or meet with the one who had deceived and rejected him, he had sought a home in this remote region where the associations would recall nothing that was painful.

But, unconscious of or indifferent to all this, Mr. Hall pursued the even tenor of his way, and, as year after year rolled by, his neighbours knew no more of him than they did when he first came among them. Neither letters nor papers came to him, nor was he ever known to correspond with any one, and the mystery that hung around him was as great as ever. Meanwhile important changes had taken place in the surroundings: the forest was rapidly disappearing; a prosperous settlement had sprung up; a church and school-house had been erected; and a young and talented minister had recently been settled among them. But, in proportion as the place became known, Mr. Hall grew more and more retiring, and latterly was rarely seen beyond the limits of his own garden.

About that time the great crusade against intemperance was in full blast, and the subject was discussed on the platform, in the pulpit, and through the press. Temperance lectures were the order of the day—the public mind was greatly agitated—and there was a great uprising against the demon drink. The minister at Mapleton threw himself into the movement with all his heart, and with true apostolic zeal went from house to house to enlist the public sympathy in the good cause. And when he thought the time had come for some decided action, he announced his intention to discuss the subject from the pulpit on a certain Sabbath evening.

Impelled by a feeling he could not account for, Mr. Hall attended the service. As the place was crowded he took a seat near the door, where he remained unnoticed until the exercises were half over. Although he had aided in the erection of the building he had never been in it before, and though contributing to the ministers' support they had rarely met. For a time Mr. Hall took no interest in what was said but sat as one in a dream, while memory was busy recalling the scenes of other days. Roused from his reverie by the ringing utterances of the young and gifted man before him, he leaned forward as if trying to identify him with some one he had previously known. The longer he had looked and listened the greater his interest became, and his whole soul was strangely excited. His agitation grew intense, his whole frame quivered with emotion, and hiding his face in his hands he wept bitterly.

When I was a boy, said the speaker, I had one of the happiest of homes, and as good a father as ever lived. My mother was one of the excellent of the earth. My every wish was anticipated, my every want supplied, and as I think of my childhood's happy days, I sometimes wish I was a boy again. But the tempter entered our Eden, robbed us of peace, and wrecked all our earthly prospects. My father became addicted to drink,