

should be entirely under her direction; but he insisted on the privilege of rearing their first-born, Aminadab, according to his own notions of propriety. In little more than a year, Mrs Sharp became the mother of another boy. She reminded her husband of his agreement, almost as soon as she heard its life-cry; and, in the joy of his heart, he solemnly ratified the engagement, conceding, in all things, to her wishes, even in the matter of baptism. Little Aminadab had never been baptized, for, as Mr Sharp justly observed, he had never been baptized himself, and he never meant to be; but he had gotten on pretty well in the world; indeed he looked upon every kind of baptism, as a *sectarian thing*. Little Joel, for that was the name chosen by Mrs. Sharp, in honour of her father, was in due time given to the Lord in baptism.

It was a favourite notion with Mr Sharp, that boys were put to their learning at much too early a period. Aminadab was permitted to run at large until he was eight years old. At length, by the earnest persuasion of Mrs Sharp, her husband was prevailed on to commit him to the care of Ma'am Wilkins, who was accordingly sent for to the house; and, in the presence of her intended charge, received particular instructions never to break the little fellow's spirit, by the application of the rod. "If study should not agree with him," said Mr Sharp, "let him do as he pleases pretty much. Leave the matter to nature, which is the true guide, after all. I've gotten on pretty well in the world, as you see, Ma'am Wilkins, and I was left pretty much to myself. Making boys study against their wills is going against nature, and this newfangled business of whipping children, in my opinion, is nothing but a *sectarian thing*." Ma'am Wilkins was too discreet, to permit an exhibition of her own notions of discipline to disturb the happy relation, subsisting between herself and so important a man as Mr Sharp. She accordingly patted Aminadab on the head, and expressed the high satisfaction she enjoyed, in the prospect of becoming his instructress. As she rose to take her departure, it was a wonder, that she did not throw the whole tea-service down upon the floor; for Aminadab had contrived to pin the table cloth to her gown; and, as it was, she went off with a large yellow marigold in her bonnet which was not noticed by Mrs Sharp, till Ma'am Wilkins was half across the common. Every judicious parent will agree, that Aminadab was richly entitled to a smart whipping, or an equivalent in some other form. "The boy will be ruined," said Mrs Sharp, "if he goes unpunished for this."—"Let him alone, my dear," said her husband, who sat shaking his sides with laughter, "it is only another evidence of his genius. Such a child requires but little teaching. He'll be a self-made man, mark my words. I used to cut such capers myself, when I was a boy, and yet you see, my dear, I've gotten along pretty well in the world."

Ma'am Wilkins had not much reason to flatter herself upon the acquisition of a new pupil in the person of Master Aminadab Sharp. The incident of the table-cloth was an inauspicious omen; and the discovery, which was not made till she reached her home, that she had been parading upon Clatterville common, with a large yellow marigold in the back of her bonnet, afforded no very favourable prognostic.

The missionary cause had become a subject of very considerable interest with the more serious people of the village; and Mrs Sharp was particularly desirous of promoting its welfare. Unfortunately her husband had formed an opinion against it. "What is the use," said he, "of wasting money upon people, whom we don't know and don't care for, at the other end of the world?"—"They are our fellow-creatures," said Mrs Sharp, "they have souls to be saved, and we can send them bibles and missionaries, which may prove the means of salvation."—"Charity begins at home," he replied.—"Well, my dear," she rejoined, "there are home missions, to which your charity will be directed, if you

prefer it."—"I don't prefer any thing about it," said Mr Sharp. "I've studied the subject to the bottom; mark my words, if it don't turn out a *sectarian thing*."

In a fortnight, Ma'am Wilkins became entirely satisfied, that she must give up the school in Clatterville or Aminadab Sharp. He was not only a privileged character, but being conscious of his own impunity for all his offences, he did precisely as he pleased; he encouraged the bad boys, and terrified the good ones, until he became, to the very letter, a praise to evil-doers, and a terror to those that did well. She addressed a respectful note to Mr Sharp, informing him that she could no longer be mistress, while Aminadab was master. Aminadab was accordingly withdrawn, Mr Sharp being perfectly satisfied that the school was altogether below the level of the boy's capacity. After a twelvemonth of idleness, he was sent to the public school.

It was about this period, if I remember rightly, that Mrs Sharp became greatly interested in the success of an auxiliary bible society, in which several of her respectable friends were earnestly engaged. She desired the pecuniary aid of her husband.—"Not a cent," said Mr Sharp; "I know just how this thing was gotten up; I know who was at the bottom of it all; it's a *sectarian thing*."

Little Joel, in all his early indications of character, presented the closest resemblance to his elder brother. He was a sprightly and rather a mischievous child, but docile, good tempered, and manageable. Mrs Sharp availed herself of all her vested rights, by virtue of the compact with her husband, to bring up little Joel in the way he should go. She watched over him with unabating solicitude. From his earliest hours she had taught and accustomed him to prayer; and he had now attained an age, when she conceived it to be proper to urge her husband to establish the practice of family devotion. "Wife," said he, "you and Joel may pray as much as you have a mind to. As for myself, though the thing may be well enough in itself, I'll have nothing to do with it, it's a *sectarian thing*. Accordingly, Mrs Sharp was in the habit, morning and evening, of taking little Joel into her closet, and offering up their prayers and thanksgivings to Almighty God.

The most excellent maxims, like the sharpest tools, are capable of incalculable mischief, unskillfully employed. The accession of unexpected wealth, the opportunity for indulging in any of the luxuries of life, long withheld and suddenly presented, are frequently followed by consequences of the most ruinous character. Mr Sharp was perfectly satisfied of the truth of this position; but how strange an application he made of the principle, when he gave ardent spirits to little Aminadab, to *accustom the child to their gradual employment, and as the means of preserving him from habits of intemperance*. It is scarcely necessary to state, that he looked upon the whole temperance reformation as a *sectarian thing*. He was singularly irritable, whenever the subject was introduced, and has been heard to affirm, with great violence of manner, that he would sooner cut off his right hand, than employ it in signing a temperance pledge. Parson Moody, who was a highly respectable clergyman, had been earnestly requested by Mrs Sharp, to converse with her husband on the subject; for she had lately become somewhat alarmed at his daily and increasing indulgence. Parson Moody was a consistent advocate of the temperance cause. He had resolved, before God, to abstain from the use of spirit, and he had no scruples against giving an outward and visible sign of that resolution before man. He had therefore signed the pledge of the temperance society. He was not of that number, who strain at the gnat, after having swallowed and digested every inch of the camel. To be sure, among his parishioners, there were two wealthy distillers and several influential grocers and retailers; but there were few clergymen, less likely to be diverted from the performance of any duty,