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A SECTARIAN THING.

(Continued.)

An occasion soon arose, which produced a discussion of considerable interest between Mr. Sharp and his worthy minister.—“Good morning my friend,” said Parson Moody, as he entered the merchant’s parlour at an unusually early hour, for a morning visit. Mr. Sharp returned the salutation with his usual kindness of manner, for he had a high respect and esteem for the good clergyman. After he had been seated for a short time, Mr. Sharp, attracted by the uncommon solemnity of his manner, interrupted the silence, by inquiring after the news of the morning. “It is not an agreeable office to be the bearer of bad news,” the good man replied. “Dear sir,” exclaimed the affrighted merchant, rising suddenly from his seat, and seizing the minister by his hand, “has any accident happened to the factories?”—“None that I have head of.”—“You relieve me of my anxiety,” rejoined the merchant.—“And yet,” continued his reverend friend, “you never had cause of greater anxiety in your whole life. I have come here to discharge a duty, and to inform you, that unless a remedy can be thought of, and immediately applied, your son Aminadab will become a drunkard!”—“Gracious Heaven!” said Mr. Sharp, “what can you mean? My son a drunkard. I would rather follow him to his grave.”—“I know you would,” the clergyman replied, “and I have no doubt that the consequence, which I solemnly predict, appears altogether improbable to you. But permit me to ask you, my friend, are you ignorant that your boy drinks ardent spirits?”—“My dear sir,” said Mr. Sharp, “I have given him a little, now and then, from his childhood, that he might become familiarized to the use of it; and lest, if I kept it from him, he might hanker after it; and when he became his own man, fall into bad habits.”—“My good friend,” returned the clergyman, “did you ever hear of a sensible physician, who proposed to familiarize his patients with the cholera or yellow fever, by inoculating them a little?”—“But the cholera and the yellow fever,” said Mr. Sharp,

“are fatal diseases, and drinking ardent spirit is by no means always fatal.”—“Nay, my friend,” the minister rejoined, “those diseases are not *always* fatal, and inoculation, with the matter of either is, in no respect, more unnecessary than drinking ardent spirit; which may, with perfect propriety, be called inoculation for intemperance. Some men will take the distemper, and others will not. Some will escape premature death, and do worse, by living on, a burthen to themselves and their friends. Four-fifths of all crime and nine-tenths of all domestic wretchedness, are believed to arise from the use of ardent spirit.”—“Be this as it may,” Mr. Sharp replied, “I keep a good watch upon my boy, and nobody ever saw him the worse for liquor.”—“You deceive yourself, my friend,” said Parson Moody, “this very last night he stole out of your back-door, no doubt after you and your family were in bed, and in the society of some of the most abandoned boys in the village, was found intoxicated, at a dram-shop in Tinker’s Alley.”

When the evidence and statements of the good clergyman had removed every doubt of the fact from the mind of Mr. Sharp, he appeared to suffer the deepest distress, but expressed his determination to inflict severe personal chastisement upon Aminadab.—“My afflicted friend,” said Parson Moody, taking the hand of his parishioner, “will such a course be even-handed justice? Your child has, without doubt, been misled. Ought not the weight of your displeasure to fall upon the *author* of this deplorable mischief?”—“Undoubtedly,” replied the agonized father, “have you any suspicion, reverend sir, which may lead to his detection?” This faithful counsellor, still holding him by the hand, replied, with an expression of mingled pity and severity—“And Nathan said unto David, *Thou art the man!*”—The miserable father bowed down his head, and burst into a flood of tears.

For the first time in his life, the image was fairly and faithfully before him of all the *horrible consequences of his own unaccountable improvidence and folly*. He had himself escaped thus far the shame and sin of habitual intoxication; and he had counted, with perfect confidence, upon the same good fortune for his child. He had admitted into the calculation no allowance for difference of moral power or physical temperament, to resist the destructive influence of ardent spirit; nor for the different kinds and degrees of temptation to which they might respectively be liable; nor for the fact, that he himself had commenced at the age of manhood, and that the experiment was begun with Aminadab when a child.

Mr. Sharp was in the condition of a man who had disregarded the symptoms of some fatal disease, the knowledge of whose existence had cast an air of solemnity over the countenance of every friend; while the sufferer himself, utterly unconscious how soon the lease of life would expire, sported with the flimsy remnant of existence as if it were only the beginning. What are the sensations of such an individual when the physician reveals to him the fatal secret, or the first gush of blood from the lungs summons the miserable pilgrim to put his house in order! Such were the feelings of this unhappy parent when he first began to