

—Many were the bonds and mortgages he held, for which the givers had received disease and death. Yet Elder M—— held a high place in the church, and thanked God that he was not as other men. Was the Bible to be given to the destitute, or the Gospel sent to the heathen, he gave largely; but the prayers of the wretched and suffering around him, made so by his own hands, he regarded not. Daily praying that him and his might not be led into temptation, yet he furnished all with the means of moral, temporal and eternal death.

Elder M—— did not escape the fangs of the serpent of his still. Of two sons, his only children, one already filled the drunkard's grave, the other was fast following to the same end. This son was a highly accomplished young man, who, but for the habits of intemperance into which he had fallen, would have been the pride of the circle in which he moved.—Amiable, intelligent, with a mind finely cultivated, he was the pride of his father's heart, and should have been the stay of his declining years. But alas! alas! although young, he was a drunkard.

The meetings had now been some time in progress. The distiller had been a regular attendant, and at times seemed almost ready to persuasion, and the better feelings that would sometimes seize upon him.—The last meeting of the series had been announced, and when I arrived I found the church full to overflowing, and the distiller and his son occupying seats near the desk. After the lecture, I approached the old man, and again solicited him to sign the pledge.

'No,' said he, 'I cannot, I will not, my mind is made up, I will not sign the pledge; but,' continued he, 'I'll tell you what I will do; there's John if you will get him to sign, and stick to it for one year, I will give you a thousand dollars. God knows, I would give half that I am worth to see him reformed; as for myself, I think it my privilege to drink a little when I think I want it. I do not drink much; and I am not willing to sign away my liberty, because I can govern myself.'

I then went to John, and informed him that his father was anxious for him to sign the pledge.

'The deuce he is,' replied John, 'why should I give up drinking while he refuses to do so, and still continues to make and sell that which makes me drunk. No! no! the old man don't catch me in that way.'

Finding that John was at that moment far from sober and not likely to comply with his father's wishes, I moved off—but I was soon stopped by John, who said:

'Is father very anxious for me to sign?'

Yes, I replied, he has offered to pay one thousand dollars to secure your name to the pledge.

'Then, if it is such a good thing,' rejoined John, 'why don't he sign himself?' I know him: he has often told me he would give me any sum if I would only stop drinking.—Now I'll show you how very anxious he is, and getting up from his seat he said—'Ladies and gentlemen, my father, the Elder over there,' pointing to him, 'wants me to sign the pledge; now if he'll sign it, I will, and I'll keep it too!'

The old man was thunderstruck, and every eye was turned upon him, and every ear ready to catch the slightest whispering that might fall from his lips.

The Elder rose to his feet, and turning to his son, said, 'John, it is rather sudden, I am not quite prepared for this; will you give me three days to make up my mind?'

'Yes,' replied his son, 'three days or three weeks, if you wish, whenever you are ready, I will be, and not before.'

'Three days will do,' said the old man, as he took his seat, 'but mind, I shall hold you to your promise.'

'All right,' said John.

The meeting broke up, every one rejoiced at the turn the matter had taken. The greater part believed the

contract would end in shutting up the distillery, and thereby save the young man. Some doubted, and all were anxious to see the issue.

The first, second and third day passed, John, in the meantime, keeping 'pretty strait,' or as he expressed it, 'tapering off.' The evening of the third day came.

'Well, father, I shall be ready to fulfil my part of the contract to-morrow morning: will you be ready?'

The old man seemed troubled.—There was evidently a struggle going on in his mind; he desired his son's salvation, but how to relinquish his nefarious business he knew not.

'John,' he at last said, 'will nothing else do but this? I will do anything you require, except sign that hateful pledge, for I shall be laughed at. I do not like to be driven into this measure. Come now, on your simple promise to abstain for one year, I will give you a deed to the Manor property.'

'Well, now, that is a good one,' replied John, laughing, 'why, I wonder who you would give it to anyhow, if not to me? No, no, father, the pledge is the thing, let us sign the pledge, I feel that it alone will keep me from ruin. I know not why; but, father, I have had strange feelings for several days, and I have a presentiment that evil would befall us both, if we neglect to sign this pledge.'

'Well,' said the old man, sorrowfully, 'if I must, I must; but think of it until morning, and if your mind remains unchanged, I will sign the pledge, and there's my hand upon it.'

'But, father, why not now, it will be better I know, I feel it will be better.'

'No, not to-night; one night can make no difference, and you surely can take my word until morning.'

Who shall account for those strange foreshadowings of evil, which sometimes steal upon us, and weigh down our spirits with a mountain weight of consciousness of unseen yet impending danger?

John left his father's presence, sad and afflicted, fearful forebodings of the morrow filled his heart.

Early in the morning, and as soon as breakfast was over, John produced the pledge, together with pen and ink. The father looked sullen and dissatisfied.

'Come, father, your name first, you are the elder, besides, that was the bargain.'

'Take it away, out of my sight with it, you are only conspiring with those cursed temperance fanatics to make a laughing-stock of me. In less than three months, you and they will break your boasted pledge, and I will be the mock of all, as an old fool, who gave up a flourishing and profitable business, to please a set of crazy fools and designing knaves.'

Bursting into tears, the young man meekly replied, 'Father, sign it.'

'I will not,' shouted the old distiller; 'do as you please with it, but never mention it to me again.'

The son dried his tears, and looking his angry father in the face, calmly said, 'I KNEW IT,' then turned and left his presence.

The old man arose and went to the sideboard, and poured out and drank several glasses of liquor in quick succession, and as he turned to the window, he saw John slowly leaving the house on horseback.

Look, old man, look earnestly, it is thy last look at thy living son. Thou shalt see him again, but better thou didst lose thy sight first. These words seemed to be whispered in his ear; he turned, but he was alone.

The day passed on; John, angered at his father's conduct, rode to a small village a few miles distant from his home, and sought to drown his anguish in the maddening bowl. Late in the afternoon, he started on his return, scarcely able to retain his saddle. He proceeded in safety