

"What do you think is the matter?" asked the man, anxiously stooping forward.

"Scarlet fever," answered the doctor, authoritatively.

"Is there any danger, think you?"

"Not as much as there might be," answered the doctor with a growl. "Go about your business or the lad 'ill be dead ere you reach him."

Thus admonished, the man sprung to his horse, but ere the sound of the galloping feet died in the distance, the doctor, overcome by the unusual effort, was sound asleep.

Accustomed to this termination of his orgies, two of the innkeeper's sons dragged rather than carried him to an outhouse, where the carriers and pedlers who frequently stayed at the inn, slept, and tossing him into one of the beds left him there to sleep off his drunkenness. It was nearly noon ere he awoke on the succeeding day, with dizzy, confused brain and aching limbs. The engagement of the previous night and indeed its events were forgotten, and although reminded of it, he was in no state nor humor to fulfil it. It was fortunate for the doctor's reputation that the turn of the disease had been reached ere he was sent for. A strong constitution and nature unaided did the work which the confiding friends attributed to the powders. Two days thereafter the father returned to ask some more of those powders from the doctor, as they had already done so much good. This time the doctor was (a rare occurrence) sober, and did not choose again to risk the chance virtues of magnesia and soda. A purchase, or rather loan of some medicine from his more careful, practical medical brother, enabled him to send a compound which was more likely to benefit.

But not so fortunate was he always in his carelessness. The providential discovery of the contents of a vial which he had sent to a patient as castor oil, but which in reality was laudanum, while it saved his patient's life, rent his already tattered reputation fearfully. *Delirium tremens* seized upon its victim. In his frenzies it was unsafe to approach him, unless he were securely tied. He made several attempts at his own life and that

of his wife and children, and recovered from one attack to be only a drivelling, palsied idiot. His wife, who had pawned everything that was valuable in the house, at last sold her own clothes and his and those of their children to gratify her fearful appetite, and finally, in despair at her condition, put an end to her miserable existence. The poor idiot and his children became inmates of the poor-house. The appetite which had ruined him did not desert him when it had ruined him. He would watch at the little grated window to see if he could see any of his old acquaintances, when he would beg from them most piteously, even going on his knees to ask them, to procure him a glass of gin. A most miserable wreck was he with his bloated blue face, his idiotic sunken eyes, his feeble crouching gait, his trembling, palsied limbs.

But the Weston bar was as much thronged, its landlord was as smiling, his daughters as gay and hearty as when he had been amongst them evoking smiles by his ready wit.

James Forbes in his family had not escaped the curse which seems to follow the liquor traffic. The bleared and watery eyes, crimson, pimpled faces, of his oldest son, might have hinted at present and coming trouble from him; the bold, hardened faces of his daughters, so ready with the jest and repartee, were a painful contrast to the modest, pleasant looks they had worn when first they stood behind the bar. The domineering, hard-featured dame who stood with arms akimbo gaudily dressed, giving orders or watching her daughters—surely she could not be the bustling but kind-hearted wife who had borne James Forbes his children and reared them carefully to manhood and womanhood in the thatch-covered, cosy farmhouse, their previous home. The oldest daughter, Jane, was about to be married to a James Maxwell, a son of one of their old neighbors, who, through their influence, had become, if not yet a regular drunkard, on fair way to reach that conclusion. Had any one suggested to pretty Jeanie Forbes the possibility of her ever marrying a drunkard when first she came to Weston, she would have shrunk in disgust from the idea, and would