

make, that he seemed, as it were, desperately bent on plunging himself into irrecoverable ruin, instead of attending to his affairs, and trying, by economy, to retrieve his fortunes. By degrees the most valuable portion of his stock melted away for the supply of his more pressing necessities, until at last the strong hand of the law was laid upon all that remained, and there was a temporary cessation. Things continued in this way during the summer, and how Miss Lindsay and the family managed to remain, as they did, in comparative ignorance of the amount of embarrassment, it is difficult to determine. Even the seizure of all the effects and furniture in the house was looked upon rather as a matter of form than as the necessary prelude to the melancholy result which a very short time was destined to bring about.

It was not a year from the death of Mrs. Lindsay, and yet the downward career of the headstrong husband had been rapid and melancholy. It was not at first the love of dissipation that had led him on; but now that he felt himself gradually sliding from his once high character and influence, and the bitter thought rested upon his mind that it was all his own doing, and the necessary result of his foolish and headstrong course, he found it impossible to lay the blame upon his relatives or the father of his wife. He often tried to blame them, nay would sometimes rage against them, but the load of self-accusation lay heavy on his heart, and could not be removed or modified by indulgence in irregular and debauched habits. He must have known—he could not but have known—that his conduct must speedily involve his family in great suffering; but what is there that can arrest the downward progress of the man whose very bodily functions are deranged and diverted from their natural course, to become his craving and insatiable tormentors. There was a gnawing cancer in his bosom, which gathered fresh vigour from every indulgence: he found no rest nor consolation in the bosom of his family,—nothing to bring him back to happiness and the sense of self respect. There was nothing in the future but a fearful something which he dared not contemplate, a punishment gradually coming nearer, and threatening soon to visit him with its heavy hand. All that was past was full of self-upbraiding and shame. He had broken his vow, and violated a solemn pledge recorded in Heaven against him; his family he had slighted, and perhaps it was this very sense of his ill conduct that drove him still more madly forward.

In the course of my frequent visits at the house, I found reason to admire the prudence and good sense of Charles, in the management of the farm, which, young and inexperienced as he was, had almost entirely devolved on him by the father's neglect. He never dared to remonstrate when he found his father excited by his excess or by bad hu-

mour, but would embrace an occasional opportunity of getting his sanction to his proceedings, when he found him disposed to take any interest in the routine of the farm business. In his sister too he found an affectionate adviser and aid. She had been so long ill and dependent on others for assistance, that her recovery to health seemed a double blessing, now that matters were becoming more and more involved. For my own part, my attendance had been so regular, and so uniformly pleasant, that I was almost led to regret a recovery which deprived me of all reasonable excuse for farther visits and intercourse with the family, in each member of which I now felt a deep interest.

During the period of convalescence, when I found Miss Lindsay able to read or listen to reading, not only without injury but with positive benefit, I used to spend many an hour in turning over the remains of Captain Lindsay's once valuable collection of books. The older of the English authors, and especially the renowned bards whose glory has thrown so bright a lustre over England's literary history, were an especial study, and it was with no small surprise that I found Miss Lindsay perfectly well versed in most of these standard classic authors. It had been her mother's delight, and indeed her almost sole occupation, to watch over the development of her daughter's mind, and she had diligently and carefully trained her up as well in the more useful branches of education, which circumstances had now rendered so very essential to the comfort of the bereaved family, as in those lighter accomplishments which always please when they are not the only qualifications which claim our admiration.

Was it a wonder if I found it more agreeable to spend my leisure hours at the fireside of my fair patient than in my dull office, with my Galen's head and unsavoury medicines?

In short, gentlemen, had it not been for the peculiar circumstances of the case, I should have begun to pay some attention to the gossiping stories which always are spread about in a country village, when a young physician pays attention to a young and fair patient.

Things, however, were brought sooner to a crisis than I had imagined. The creditors had taken proceedings against the property of Captain Lindsay; and one morning in the end of September, when every thing had been gathered in, and winter had sent its outrunners to prepare us for his approach, the officers of justice came, and every thing was sold. Cattle, horses, furniture—every thing went, with the exception of a few of the more necessary articles which were left in the large and now desolate looking house. You may conceive the situation of affairs then. Alas! that even deeper misery was in store for the afflicted family! It happened that one evening of the same week of the sale, Captain Lindsay was returning home on horseback with