

fied that remonstrance and argument would be of no avail, now that his mind was made up to use the brandy; and yet so distressed did she feel, that she couldn't help saying, with tears in her eyes—

‘Edward, let me beg of you not to touch it.’

‘Would you rather see me in my coffin?’ replied Mr. Hobart with some bitterness. ‘Death may seem a light thing to you; but it is not to me.’

‘You are not sick,’ still urged the wife.

‘But I am liable, as I said just now, to take the disease every moment.’

‘You will be more liable, with your system stimulated and disturbed by brandy. Let well enough alone. Be thankful for the health you have, and do not invite disease.’

‘The doctor ought to know. He understands the matter better than you or I. He recommends brandy as a preventive. He takes it himself.’

‘Because he likes it, no doubt.’

‘It is silly for you to talk in that way,’ replied the husband, with much impatience. ‘He isn't rendered more liable to the disease by taking a little pure brandy, for he says that it keeps him perfectly well.’

‘A glass of brandy every day may have been his usual custom,’ urged Mrs. Hobart. ‘In that case, in its continuance, no change was produced. But your system has been untouched by the fiery liquid for nearly five years, and its sudden introduction must create disturbance. It is reasonable.’

‘The doctor ought to know best,’ was replied to this. ‘He has prescribed it, and I must take it. Life is too serious a matter to be trifled with. “An ounce of preventive is worth a pound of cure,” you know.’

‘I am in equal danger with yourself,’ said Mrs. Hobart; ‘and so are the children.’

‘Undoubtedly. And I wish you all to use a little brandy.’

‘Not a drop of the poison shall pass either my lips or those of the children,’ replied Mrs. Hobart, with emphasis.

‘As you please,’ said the husband coldly, and turned away.

‘Edward!’ Mrs. Hobart laid her hand upon his arm. ‘Edward! let me beg of you not to follow this advice.’

‘Why will you act so foolishly? Has not the doctor ordered the brandy? I look to him as the earthly agent for the preservation of my health, and the saving of my life. If I do not regard his advice, in what am I to trust?’

‘Remember the past, Edward,’ said the wife, solemnly.

‘I do remember it. But I fear no danger.’

Mrs. Hobart turned away sadly, and went up to her chamber to give vent to her feelings alone in tears.

Firm to his purpose of using the preventive recommended by the doctor, Mr. Hobart, after dinner took a draught of brandy and water. Nearly five years, as his wife remarked, had elapsed since a drop of the burning fluid had passed his lips. The taste was not overly agreeable. Indeed his stomach rather revolted as the flavor reached his palate.

‘It's vile stuff, at best,’ he remarked to himself, making a wry face. ‘Fit only for medicine. Not much danger of my ever loving it again. I wish Anna was not so foolish. A flattering opinion she has of her husband!’

The sober countenance of his wife troubled Mr. Hobart, and he left home for his place of business earlier by half an hour than usual. Neither in mind nor body were his sensations as pleasant as on the day before. The brandy did something more than produce an agreeable warmth in his stomach. A burning sensation soon followed its introduction, accompanied by a feeling of uneasiness that he did not like. In the course of half an hour, this unnatural heat was felt in every part of his body, but more particularly about his head and face; and it was accompanied by a certain confusion of mind that prevented his usual close application to business during the afternoon.

Towards evening, these disagreeable consequences of the glass of cholera preventive he had taken, in a great measure subsided; but there followed a dryness of the palate, and a desire for some drink more pleasant to the taste than water. In his store was a large pitcher of ice-water; but, though thirsty, he felt no inclination to taste the pure beverage; but instead, went out and obtained a glass of soda water. This only made the matter worse. The half gill of syrup with which the water was sweetened, created, in a little while, a more uneasy feeling. Still, there was no inclination for the water that stood just at hand, and which he had daily found so refreshing during the hot weather. In fact, when he thought of it, it was with a sense of repulsion.

In this state, the idea of a cool glass of brandy punch, or a mint julep, came up in his mind, and he felt the draught in imagination, at his lips.

‘A little brandy twice a day; so the doctor said.’ This was uttered half aloud.

Just at the moment a light pain crossed his stomach. It was the first sensation of the kind he had experienced since the epidemic he so much dreaded had appeared in the city; and it caused a slight shudder to go through his frame, for he was nervous in his fear of cholera.

‘A little mint with the brandy would make it better still. I don't like this feeling. I'll try a glass of brandy and mint.’ Thus spoke Mr. Hobart to himself.

Putting on his hat, he went forth for the purpose of getting some brandy and mint. As he stepped into the street, the pain was felt again, and more distinctly. The effect was to cause a slight perspiration to manifest itself on the face and forehead of Mr. Hobart, and to make, in his mind, the necessity for the brandy and mint more imperative. He did not just like to be seen going boldly in at the door of a refectory or drinking house in a public place, for he was a Son of Temperance, and any one who knew this and happened to see him go in, could not, at the same time, know that he was merely acting under his physician's advice. So he went off several blocks from the neighbourhood in which his store was located, and after winding his way along a narrow, unfrequented street, came to the back entrance of a tavern, where he went in, as he desired, unobserved.

Years before, Hobart had often stood at the bar where he now found himself. Old, familiar objects and associations brought back old feelings, and he was affected by an inward glow of pleasure.

‘What! you here?’ said a man who stood at the bar, with a glass in his hand. He was also a member of the order.

‘And you here!’ replied Mr. Hobart.

‘It isn't for the love of it, I can assure you,’ remarked the man as he looked mearingly at his glass. ‘These are not ordinary times.’

‘You are right there,’ said Hobart.

‘A little brandy sustains and fortifies the system. That all admit.’

‘My physician has directly ordered it for me. He takes a glass or two every day himself, and tells me that, so far, he has not been troubled with the first symptom.’

‘Indeed. That is testimony to the point.’

‘So I think.’

‘Who is your physician?’

‘Dr. L——.’

‘He stands high. I would at any time trust my life in his hands.’

‘I am willing to do so.’ Then turning to the bar-keeper, Mr. Hobart said—‘I'll take a glass of brandy and water, and you may add some mint.’

‘Perhaps you'll have a mint julep?’ suggested the bar-keeper, winking aside to a man who stood near, listening to what passed between the two members of the Order.

‘Yes—I don't care—yes. Make it a julep,’ returned