



FIREBRANDS



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SAMUEL IN THE DISTILLERY YARD.—Page 255.



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# FIREBRANDS.

## A TEMPERANCE TALE.

BY

*JULIA McNAIR WRIGHT,*

AUTHOR OF "A STRANGE SEA STORY," "JUG-OR-NOT," "LIFE CRUISE OF CAPTAIN BESS ADAMS," "NOTHING TO DRINK," "HOW COULD HE ESCAPE," "THE EMERALD SPRAY," ETC.

*"Le vin est la source des plus grands maux parmi les peuples ; il cause les maladies, les querelles, les seditions, l'oisiveté, le dégoût du travail, le désordre des familles."*—M. FENELON.

"Wine is the source of the greatest woes among nations ; it causes diseases, quarrels, seditions, indolence, hatred of work, disorder in families."—*Trans.*

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# FIREBRANDS.

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## CHAPTER I.

### ARCADIA.

“ Turn, turn my wheel ! What is begun  
At daybreak must at dark be done,  
To-morrow will be another day ;  
To-morrow the hot furnace flame  
Will search the heart and try the frame  
And stamp with honor or with shame  
These vessels made of clay.”



VALLEY of Western New York, lying in the level sunset light, the stage rolling along the turnpike into the village of Ryreson ; the stage driver, Jean Clerc, a French refugee, a man of conceit, oddity and ability ; beside him on the box, Hugh Richardson, agent of a “ dry goods and notion store, wholesale, Ripley &

Co., New York ;” and standing between Hugh R.’s knees, and leaning back against his breast, a warm-faced boy of six, fast asleep. The stage swept by great fields of oats, silvered for cutting ; past barns partly filled with clover lately mown ; barnyards where high golden stacks of wheat waited for threshing ; shady orchard corners, where the laughter of the maids rippled from the shelter of the cows they were milking ; across the fields crept hay wagons laden with fragrant timothy, and row on row, along the promise-full acres, the corn was just ready to break into tassel.

“A hundred times I have come through this valley,” said Hugh Richardson, “and I always think that nothing equals it, for a scene of peace and abundance. The world holds no match for it.”

“I have seen ze same,” said Jean Clerc, with his deliberate speaking of English, “in France, and along ze Pays Bas, in days of—of childhood. I have seen ze same beauty, and peace, and abundance, and, I have seen

ze curse come down, fall like ze thunderbolt, or creep up slowly like ze shadow, and all was spoil. War, perhaps, most likely, and ze pretty mill stream did turn to blood like ze big river of Egypté long ago, and all ze smiling plain was blood too."

He pointed before them. The sunset had fallen athwart the placid stream that turned the Ryreson Mills, and the water lay a sheet of crimson between its green banks; that same red ray had fallen upon the meadow, the best dairy land of Ryreson, and that too looked like a field of recent carnage. Clerc continued:

"You cannot tell who will bring ze ruin. It may be Louis, born in ze palais, or it may be ze little man from Corsica. Ze firebrand may now be growing in such petite new tree as stands green and—jolie, here by our road; or it may be now asleep in ze small garcon here," and he laid a light finger on the little sleeper's breast.

"If I thought so!" cried Hugh Richardson, with a sudden shrinking from the child,

“I would pitch him overboard into that heap of stones !”

“No, no, Monsieur Richard-son, it would then be to lift the evil from ze petit garcon, to your own soul. We may not do evil to hinder evil. You could not do crime to stop what may be possiblement ze crime of one small garcon ; and then, if it ees written it ees written ; if he is to be the firebrand, va, he will burn, he would burn ze heap of stones ; but see, he does not look it, he is fat and jolie, and ze hot sun has burn him !”

“Chut ! you are a fatalist, Clerc,” cried Hugh.

“I cannot tell what I am ; possiblement I am much evil and some good, like ze rest of men ; but I am sure it would not be good to toss out ze little orphan garcon.”

The stage passed Ryreson’s Mills, and the blacksmith’s shop ; passed the new brick church with its sharp little spire, passed the white parsonage with green blinds, and a marvellous garden, where fuschias, and geraniums, and heliotrope mingled with the

regulation hollyhocks, and foxglove, and larkspur, and featherfew, and Canterbury bells, of ordinary Ryreson gardens; passed the drug store, which was also the post-office, where the mail bag was tossed to a waiting crowd; passed the white house whose shutters were tied with black ribbons, and whose door plate bore the legend, 'Doctor Murtry,' and then with a fine crackling of the whip, flourish of reins, tossing of horses' heads, and grinding of wheels, stopped before Hiram Beck's dry goods store, *the* store of Ryreson. A little knot of customers stood just within the store door, conspicuous among them a woman nearing middle age, whose dress and frilled white cap bespoke her of the mother country, and who carried upon her arm a young babe upon whose white cap and robe were bows of black ribbon. As the stage stopped, the sleeping boy awoke, and Hugh Richardson, leaping to the sidewalk, placed him speedily on his feet, his chip hat half falling from his ruddy curls, his gingham blouse and nan-

keen trousers rumpled, his blue eyes staring, ready to cry.

“Hullo! Richardson, glad to see you,” shouted Hiram Beck, coming from behind his counter; “trade’s brisk, and the folks want new goods. Got something new?”

“Something I hope you’ll like,” said Hugh, gravely, holding out his hand. “Mr. Beck, I’m sorry to tell you your brother up in Kenville is dead, and I’ve brought you his boy.”

“Dead!” cried Beck, quailing a little, as he always did at hearing of a death. There was an undertone of *memento mori* running through that word which chilled him; then recovering himself, he demanded, in his worst tone, “What did you bring the boy here for?”

“For you to take care of,” said Hugh, briskly, “being his uncle, and well-to-do.”

“No thanks to his father if I am well-to-do, which I ain’t; he owed me a hundred dollars which he never paid, unless you call sending the boy payment.”

“It may prove the best of payment,” said Richardson; “a comfort and tower of strength to your old age.”

“Well, I tell you, I wont keep him,” roared Beck.

“Not keep him!” cried Hugh, amazed.

“No, I wont. I’m too poor to do for strangers. I ain’t going to open an orphan asylum. I never liked children.”

“Shame to you, to turn against your own kith,” said the woman, clasping the babe closer. “Ye canna be fashed wi ye’r ain brither’s bairn, shame till ye!”

“Come, now,” said Hugh, putting a finger under the chin of the boy, who stood confounded in the midst, “look up, my lad. Mr. Beck, do you refuse to take this child, your brother’s orphan, little Tom Beck? Look up at him, laddie.”

The child looked up at Mr. Beck. Mr. Beck flinched a little. Perhaps he had a certain recollection of times when that other Tom Beck, now dead, his little brother, barefooted, ragged-hatted, warm-faced, like

this little fellow, had followed him fishing and berrying, out and in, looking up to him as to some sylvan demi-god, master of rural sports. But the memory was brief; the Becks had never been a loving family, except as they loved money, and this Tom Beck had not been thrifty. Hiram Beck recovered himself, and opened his defence, harshly.

“His father had no claim upon me. I told him long ago to look for nothing. He quarrelled with me and left my employ.” (Hiram had only offered him board for his work). “He married, against my advice, a girl without a copper. He wouldn’t bide with me when I wanted him, and I might have kept the post-office and made something if he had stopped.” (There had been certain discrepancies in distributing mails, under Hiram’s administration.) “And, finally, I lent him, after being badgered to death, a hundred dollars to go up to Ken-ville, and teach a school, on promise that he’d never ask another red of me; and,

here, I'd like to know how you come to bring me that—that boy here, for me to take care of!"

"The story is easily told," said Hugh Richardson, as the knot of listeners had grown larger, reinforced from the post-office, where the mail had been distributed. "In the way of business, I have been at Ken-ville off and on this two years. Your brother taught the district school winters, and a pay school summers, and boarded at the tavern since his wife died, three years ago. I got acquainted with him, and as I call now and then here in Ryreson, he was always glad to hear news of his old home. He was broken in health, and sad of heart, and neither expected nor cared to live long. Last December he said to me: 'Richardson, when I die, I shall tell these people here to keep the boy until you come round, and then I want you to take him to Ryreson, to my brother Hiram; he has no family, and he is well off—'"

"I say, I ain't!" interrupted Beck.

“ ‘And I want you to give him my love, and say there must be no hard feelings against the dead, and to take my boy and bring him up, and do the fair thing by his only nephew ;’ and so, Mr. Beck, I went there last week, and poor Tom was dead, this month past.”

“What did he die of?” asked a bystander.

“Well, I suppose it was—cholera.”

“Cholera !” was the cry, and there was a general falling back from Hugh and the child, Hiram returning behind the counter. “Cholera !” said one, “how dare you bring cholera here ?”

“There’s no danger,” said Hugh, coolly ; “that was six weeks past. I tell you, there’s no danger, the child is healthy. Well, as I said, Tom was gone, and what little he left had barely buried him, and paid up the child’s board until I took him away ; and here he is, a baby without home or a copper, thrown entirely on your mercy, Mr. Beck.”

A murmur went round: "You'll have to take him, Beck."

"Poor, bairnie," said the woman.

Beck gathered up his resolution. "I tell you I won't take him—I don't like children, nor understand children. If I had him here neighbors would be fault-finding, and questioning, and meddling, everlastingly. And as for you, Richardson, pity you hadn't minded your own business, and left him at Kenville for some one to adopt, or to be bound out, or go to the poorhus."

"Shame, ye fause hearted loon!" muttered the woman.

Beck looked angrily at his audience.

"Anyway, Richardson, you brought him, and you may keep him; and, more than that, hereafter I'll have nothing to do with you. I'll have none of your goods, and I'll not trade a dime's worth with Ripley & Co."

"We'll go right on, selling goods all the same," said Hugh, placidly. "Now, here's the rest of my story: Tom said to me, 'Richardson, brother Hiram always was hard,

and set in his notions, and, perhaps you can't persuade him to take the boy. In that case, there is old Nebby North, my wife's uncle; he is all alone in the world, and though he is older and poorer than Hiram, I don't think he'll turn away the child that is his last relative.' Now, Mr. Beck, if you, in the presence of these witnesses, refuse this orphan, I'll take him to Nebby North, and if he takes him, I'll go to a magistrate and have him duly made over to him, right and tight."

Hiram Beck looked immensely relieved.

"I refuse him," he said, promptly. "I don't want no children 'round me."

"Nebby North will take him," said one neighbor.

"He's much better off with Nebby," said another; and then Hugh Richardson, holding his head higher than usual, stalked out of the store, leading little Tom by the hand. Some of the lookers on followed to see the matter out at North's, while others stopped to explain to the latest comers that Hugh

Richardson had brought from Kenville Tom Beck's boy, who was left a beggar, Tom being dead of cholera, and Hiram Beck wouldn't listen to taking him, and now they were gone to Nebby North's with him.

The general impression was that Nebby would take him. Meanwhile Hugh and his orphan walked to the farther end of the long white village, to a small stone cottage standing in three acres of garden. A little gray old man, gray-haired, gray corduroy trousers, gray flannel shirt wide open at the neck, gray felt hat, pushed back, was weeding a flower border.

"Is this Mr. North?" queried Hugh.

"Nebby North, yes;" said the gardener, straightening himself.

"You had a niece, Mary Brown, who married Tom Beck about seven years ago?"

"So I did, so I did," said the old man, coming to the fence. "A pretty girl, but I find the prettiest flowers are soonest to fade. She died three years back, and I sent Tom

money to put up a grave stone for her ; Tom was poor."

"Tom is dead now, six weeks ago," said Hugh.

"Dear, dear, poor Tom ! But wasn't there a little boy ? Tom was never a hand to write letters ; no more am I, but I think there was a little boy ?"

"Yes, and here he is," said Hugh, showing his orphan. "I promised Tom I'd bring the child to Ryreson and get Hiram Beck to adopt him if he would, and if he wouldn't, to bring him to you. Hiram says he wont have him."

"Dear, dear, and this is Mary's boy !" said the old man, bustling to open the gate. "And Hiram wont have him ! Well, between us, it is just as well ; Hiram might have been hard with him, you know. I'll keep him ; you might ha' brought him to me first."

"But Hiram was nearest kin, and Tom hated to burden you with the care of a child."

"Tuts ! a child like that wont be much of

a burden," said the old man, taking off the boy's hat, and smoothing his head. "But Hiram is nearest kin, as you say," he added shrewdly, "and if he refuses, and I keep this boy, he's going to be tied to me tight and fast by law; or as soon as he's big enough to be of use, Hiram will take him, and work him like a dog, or, like a slave; dogs don't work."

"Not in this country," said Hugh, smiling, "but I agree with you, you'd better get legal possession of the child if you want him."

"Why, land!" cried the old man, "I wouldn't turn off my own blood, and then I'm lonesome, and I always liked little boys. Come, sonny, come have some bread and milk and go to bed. Thank you for bringing him, Mr., and I'll see you in the morning."

And now the stage has long since swept onward to the next village, and the sun has been down for an hour, and the twilight is fading away; the good people are drawing within doors, and the little children are

abed. Let us in the waning light walk up and down the village of Ryreson. Here is the inn — “Wheat Sheaf,”— where Clerc changed the horses of the “Golden Fly.” “Entertainment for man and beast,” runs the sign, in blue and white. The entertainment for the beast is oats, corn, hay and water; for the man, ham, potatoes, apple pie and tea; mild refreshments, certainly, which never hurt any one. This stone house is the lawyer’s, Squire Judd; his work is mostly in drawing up wills and making out deeds and conveyances; there is almost no litigation here. Squire Judd is by no means rich.

And here is Doctor Murtry’s. His wife died lately, and the nurse at the store was the servant who came from Scotland with him; and the babe of six months, is his only surviving child, Agnes. The doctor, like the lawyer, has small practice. The people here are hardy and long-lived; there are no epidemics: children are born, and have the diseases incident to childhood, and one by

one, at long intervals, the older people drop off. The doctor, though he has the best furnished house in town, is a poor man. Yonder is Ryreson the miller's homestead; three generations of Ryresons have lived here.

Uncle Nebby North might be taken as a sample of the village people. They rise early, retire early, dine at noon; they generally are engaged in out-of-door labor; every body knows his neighbor, and, as a general thing, all feel on a social equality; there are no debts, no crimes, no quarrels, no deadly feuds; they go to church morning and afternoon on Sabbath, and to prayer-meeting on Wednesday evening. They have a Sunday-school picnic, and a day-school exhibition once a year; and keep with zest the holidays of Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Years. They have a Donation Party every Fall, and a Fair and Festival for Missions every Spring. There have been no sons or daughters here bringing their parents to shame; there are

no paupers, no heavy debts, no business failures, no jail, no poor house. Pshaw! one is dreaming and describing Arcadia! Not at all; this is a genuine valley village of Western New York, fifty years or so ago; a sample of what any country village might be in our fruitful land, if, like this one, it had no bar, no beer shop, no brewery, no distillery, within twenty miles.

You see, here the *casus belli* did not exist, therefore the *bella* did not exist, and there were no lists of dead and wounded, no war expenses. The Ryreson mill ground out its snowy flour; the big river pasture land sent its firkins of golden butter to market. The trees were laden with fruit which went to the city in barrels, or dried, and so packed in bags. Ryreson was satisfied with the goods that Hiram Beck sold, and with the year-out-of-date fashions into which they were made up; the weekly papers brought them the news, and the minister, the doctor, the lawyer and the schoolmaster, expounded to them what they

ought to think about it. Hugh Richardson had conveyed his orphan into a goodly heritage.

The night hawks which have been swooping in fine circles overhead, and dropping with shrill cries, have ceased their play; the katydids call ceaselessly; the owl hoots into the night, and is answered by the deep bass of a frog on the bank; the river, lately blood-red, ripples white in the moonshine; nor does the pasture look like a field of death.





## CHAPTER II.

### AN IDYL OF YOUTH.

“Turn, turn my wheel! The human race  
Of every tongue and every place,  
Caucasian, Coptic, or Malay,  
All that inhabit this great earth,  
Whatever be their rank or worth,  
Are kindred, and allied by birth,  
And made of the same clay.”

**H**ERE it occurs to us, that Nebby North, as the “good uncle” of this tale, deserves a further description.

Uncle Nebby is garrulous. Bending to his garden work; he talks a continued stream from morning to night, to all who lean over his fence, or follow him along the paths of his three acres. And these guests are many, from business or friendship. Let Nebby

describe himself in a monologue, gathered out of some one summer day.

“No, I don’t know why I was called Nebuchadnezzar; it’s a great name, but it never made anything great out of me. If I’d had my choice, I’d rather a been named after one of the three Hebrew children—Shadrach, maybe—gay little fellows that stood stanchly by their colors, and wouldn’t worship idols nor demean themselves by getting tipsy, or being greedy. I don’t lay no claim to a name like Daniel; he was wise, and I make no pretensions, though I do know a bit about gardening. Well, I didn’t have my choice of a name; nobody asked me when it was decided, and if they had I s’pose I wouldn’t have answered. And, yet, my name was of more account to me than to any one else. I’ve had to use it all my life. No, I don’t know why I took to gardening. I always took to it; it ran in the blood, perhaps; come of the name, possibly. You know Nebuchadnezzar took to grass and such things, finally; but I don’t hold to

making game of him ; I think he was a fine old fellow, and it appears to me that he repented hearty, and set about behaving himself at last. I don't think any other line of life would have suited me so well. The Lord knew best when he made the first man a gardener. I make a decent living by it. I've paid for my place in my time, and bought my tools, and kept myself—and some of my folks—and I've put by a little in the bank, and I've made a point of giving the Lord his share, as is only reasonable. I send seeds, and camomile flowers, and saffron, and sweet herbs, and blood root, to all the 'pothecaries within fifty mile ; and I sends out bulbs, and slips, and garden seeds as far. Folks get what I have because its all fresh and good. I go outside and gather up sweet-flag root, and slippery elm, and mint, and boneset, and a lot of such things, and I sell them to the 'pothecaries, and to the neighbors. They're always coming for five cents' worth of this and three of that. Then I supply hardy growers for some of

the grave yards within fifty mile, and I send pop corn to a city confectioner, and I supply the squire and the doctor, and one or two more who don't keep gardens, with vegetables, and so all in all, with sending out a wagon load or two of flowers in pots, fall and spring, I make the two ends meet, and more. No, I can't tell you why I never got married. I always liked women folks and their ways, and they liked me so far as I know. I suppose I would have liked a wife of my own, but time slipped along and I never asked anybody, and it wasn't reasonable that any one should ask me. My mother kept the house for me till she died, and my sister, Mary's mother, a widow, stopped with me thirteen years, and Mary lived here until she was eighteen, and then she was set on going to town to learn seamster's work. After she came back she married Tom Beck, and after Hiram quarrelled with him they went to Kenville, and I've lived alone since. I do my own work, and my house is neat. There's a woman comes

Mondays and washes, and irons and scrubs, I live very tidy, I can say. I have my cow, and my chickens, and as many nice porkers as I like to raise I can sell; but one porker and some chicks go to the parson—one can't be too good to parsons. I noticed in the Book, the Lord was very particular how the sons of Levi got treated, and right too; respecting them shows respect to Him as sends 'em. And I take pride in sending chicks, and a ham and garden sass to the schoolmaster. I've a powerful respect for schoolmasters, though I didn't go to school much myself."

Part of this talk was dispensed to Jean Clerc, who stopped for a while one morning when there were no passengers in the stage. He had heard that the orphan had fallen to Nebby North's share.

"And what will ye do with ze garcon, eh?"

"Oh, the boy? He's a nice child. I'll keep him; he wont be any trouble to me," said Nebby, cheerfully.

“May-be no — but I have seen in ze world, how all petits garçons have much human nature in their bodies. He ees a fine enfant, but no doubt, he will be bad too. What will ye do with he?”

“Ah, then I shall use—moral persuasion,” said Nebby, making a grand effort. “Moral persuasion is the way to bring up boys.”

“I make no doubts it ees very good,” said Clerc, slowly, “very—but it needs add to it—*quelque fois*—ah, sometimes a petit persuasion of peach tree. Oui, moral persuasion and a little peach tree persuasion mix in, when there is ne-cess-i-tee ; yes, it will bring ze petit garçon up very well to a good man, unless he ees born to be a firebrand—”

“Firebrand !” cried Nebby North, looking at his orphan digging valiantly at a dead rose root. “There’s nothing fiery about him, only his hair, and I like that. Those red curls look like gold in the sun, melted gold !”

But there is our orphan’s other uncle—Hiram Beck. There needs little be said

about him, for he is not the villain of the place, though he did in the opinion of everybody, perhaps even in his own, behave badly when Hugh Richardson brought his nephew to him.

When Hiram heard that Nebby "had been to the Squire's" to settle the possession of the boy, he was a little anxious. He communed with himself: "The boy will grow; he might be useful, and from ten to twenty-one, he might save me a clerk. Perhaps it would have been well to keep him. But, on the other hand, at twenty-one there would have been two suits of clothes, and a hundred dollars to hand over, and he might be sick or die, and I'd have the doctor and the funeral to pay for. And when he was little, if he looked thin, some fool would cry he is starved. If I thrashed him, a howl about cruelty; and everybody would meddle about his clothes—too thin, too old, too small! Tush, it's well I wouldn't keep him. He'll be like his father, no knack for making money, or for keeping it. A ne'er-do-well, I see it in his eye."

So Hiram Beck steadily ignored his nephew. He pretended not to recognize him when he saw him on the street ; or when the boy came to the store on errands, word or gift there was none. Other people were more kindly.

“ Send him to school, next winter, North, and I’ll give him especial attention,” said the schoolmaster.

“ Call me whenever he is ailing ; I’ll make no charge,” said Doctor Murtry.

“ I’ll knit his stockings and mend him up,” said Nurse Ross, who had charge of the Doctor’s baby.

“ Let me know when you have buying to do for him, Mr. North,” said the minister’s wife, “ I can probably make better bargains for him than you can ;” and she divided with the orphan her children’s picture books.

So the boy, Tom Beck, flourished. With the readiness of childhood he “ forgot his own people and his father’s house.” Father and mother faded from his memory. He dug garden and helped and hindered the

admiring Nebby all summer, and in winter he went to school in stubby boots, and red mittens and comforter, and droned his lessons with the best of them. He was a pretty child, a pleasant child, a healthy child, and oh, how shrewd he was! He seemed to have been born with the multiplication table in his mouth. The destructiveness of infancy was not in him. He took to addition in all its departments. He was orderly; he kept his little belongings neat and safe; no losing of his slate pencils, no crack in his slate, no dogs ears on his little primer; and when he graduated into the first reader he sold his primer for five cents. It was very praiseworthy of him—every one said so. His acquisitiveness extended to knowledge. He learned gardening from Uncle Nebby, and he liked to watch the cobbler, the carpenter, the miller and the blacksmith, and he catechized them about their trades and incomes, with a juvenile astuteness that won all hearts, and everybody said he would be a credit to Ryreson, and probably “be the making of

the place some day." A proud man was Nebby North. Some of this talk crept into Hiram Beck's store.

"Just set that child a mental arithmetic problem in dollars and cents, and see how he'll tackle it," said the schoolmaster. "If he stumbles a bit on barleycorns, or raisins, I give him the questions in coppers, and he makes for the answer, straight as a die. He'll succeed in life, mark my word."

Tom played as all boys do; he loved play, and he played marbles, and played "for keeps." In vain Uncle Nebby reasoned, and warned, and tried "moral persuasion." Tom played for keeps still. So Nebby rose up and took the law into his own hands, and made a distribution of Tom's marbles among the little boys in the neighborhood, including a forfeit of Tom's original six; and Nebby threatened a like distribution nightly, so long as the tabooed playing continued. That was effectual.

Regularly went Tom to Sunday-school with a "missionary penny," duly transferred

from Uncle Nebby's pocket to his, just before starting. Tom had his "penny house," heavy with rattling coins, but Uncle Nebby did not know that the child's lesson in giving should come from the child's own. Don't blame him; some parents even now do not know that fact. How poor Tom hated to give up that penny to the plate! He pinched it, until he nearly rubbed off the wreath of olive leaves on the reverse; sometimes he brought it home, on the plea that "he wasn't looking when the plate came round;" and then he wanted to put it in his own penny box. "You gave it to me, you know, Uncle Nebby. You don't want to take back what you gave, do you?"

Then Nebby tried more "moral persuasion," and it failed to work a change; and then he armed himself with a little brief authority, and said: "Come now, every time you try robbing the Lord, that a way, I'll march you up to the parson, with the penny I gave you, and one out of your own box with it."

So he "marched him up" once or twice, and then, like the men of Tyre, Tom took warning, and ceased to disport himself in that fashion, "from that time forth, on the Sabbath."

Nor did Uncle Hiram fail to get evidence of the manner of orphan which he had rejected. Tom was as bold as he was shrewd. He came into the store one day on an errand. "Don't you want some candy, bub?" said Hiram, carefully ignoring relationship, and reaching down a jar of "mint stick."

"Course I do, if you'll give it to me," said Tom.

"O, I've nothing to give away," cried Mr. Beck.

"Well, I've no money to throw away," retorts little Tom.

"Eh, the old man don't give you spending money?"

"D' ye mean Uncle Nebby?" quoth Tom; "yes, he gives me money, and I keep it in my penny box."

Uncle Hiram began to feel a respect for a boy who preferred a full penny box to mint stick.

Now and then this excellent storekeeper became possessed of a small counterfeit coin, passed to him in the hurry of many customers at once, or given to his "store-boy." These coins he would quite negligently drop into the change of his junior customers, and then they would go the rounds among the country people. Having such a five cent piece when Tom was ten years old, Hiram slipped it into the boy's change for a quarter. But the sharp-eyed youth detected it in a moment. He pushed the piece aside.

"'Tain't good," was his oracular remark.

"Not good!" cried Hiram, keeping far from the questionable fragment. "Why, that's good."

Tom planted his elbow on the counter, rested his chin on the palm of his hand, and looked Mr. Beck in the eye.

"Ain't you my uncle?"

“Tush! I’m nobody’s uncle,” he replied, warily.

“Come now! You are my uncle, though I ain’t anxious to claim you if you ain’t smart enough to know a bad five center. But I guess you do know it.”

Uncle Hiram swept the money into the till and reconstructed his change.

As it drew near a Christmas day, little Tom came to the store for a pound of raisins. They were twelve and a half cents the pound, and Tom laid down twelve. “Another cent,” said Mr. Beck.

“Now, look here,” said Tom, establishing himself firmly. “Didn’t I come just before Thanksgiving and get a pound, and you took thirteen cents for it? The half cent went to you that time, and now it comes to me.”

“But the storekeeper always gets the half cent, boy.”

“He oughtn’t to—share and share alike, I say.”

“Well, you ought to get two pounds at a time, then.”

“Pooh—me and Uncle Nebby can’t use two pounds up. No, Mister, you had the half cent Thanksgiving, and I mean to have it now, or you can keep your raisins. I guess I can eat pudd’n’ without raisins.”

It was a boy after his own heart; and Hiram felt that he had erred in not taking him. When Tom was twelve, Mr. Beck made friendly overtures to him. “Wouldn’t he come to him for a clerk? Mr. North would likely let him off his time until he was twenty-one, and then Mr. Beck would do well by him. Storekeeping was more respectable than gardening.”

“See, here,” said Tom, calmly. “You had your chance, Mister, when I was brought here a little shaver, and you wouldn’t take me. Now you wont get me.”

That was the first time Mr. Beck knew that Tom was aware of his rejection. Tom continued louder. “And, look a here, Mister Beck, anything a good man like Uncle Nebby does is respectable; he makes it

respectable. I'd rather him than you for respectable, any day."

"Why, you young reprobate, how dare you! Out of here!" cried Hiram, making a dash at him.

"All right," sung Tom from the street. "I can trade somewhere else!"

So after that there was open war between Uncle Hiram and the orphan.

Tom went diligently to school whenever it was in session.

"Eddication first," said Uncle Nebby.

When Tom was twelve, as he went to school one morning, his old ally, Nurse Ross, came out of Doctor Murtry's gate, leading little Agnes, prepared for school for the first time.

"Here, Tom!" cried Nurse Ross, "here be Agnes, and her primer and her dinner pail; you take her and bring her again safe to me, an' ye may do it every day hereafter."

Tom walked proudly along with the nice little child in her red dress and check apron; it gave him added importance to escort Dr.

Murtry's little girl, whose hair was tied up with a ribbon instead of a string. For three years Tom took Agnes to school, dragged her in winter on his sled, lifted her over puddles, carried her dinner pail and books; to the little maid he was a marvel of size, strength and wisdom. Then the school-master advised Uncle Nebby that Tom had thoroughly pursued all the studies of the district school, and that he should go to an academy.

“Eddication first,” said Uncle Nebby, and though the academy meant the absorption of the surplus gains of every year that Tom was away, and also the using of some portion of Uncle Nebby's past savings, the old man bought a trunk and a suit of clothes, and had a set of shirts made, and Nurse Ross knit six pairs of socks and hemmed six pocket handkerchiefs; and, said Uncle Nebby to Tom, “Now, my lad, I go in for doing the fair thing by you, and you can have two years at the academy, and so, make the best of your time.”

“Eddication first, my lad,” pursued Uncle Nebby; “and yet in saying that I don’t mean you to take it that there isn’t another thing that stands before that. Religion, my lad, as I’ve been doing my poor best to teach you ever since you came here, is the main object in life. You always appeared to me a good steady boy, Tom; you read your Bible and say your prayers, and I s’pose you accept for true all as you have been taught out of the Bible, in Sunday-school, and in church, and in my poor way, Tom?”

“Oh yes,” said Tom, very sincerely.

“And I hope, my boy, that you mean to lead a Christian life, don’t you?”

“Oh yes, certainly,” said Tom, to whom a Christian life meant merely a life of moral propriety, such as all the people of Ryreson lived.

“Well, Tom, before you go to school, I’d like to see you a church member. Parson’s a great friend of yours. The Sunday before you go, they mean to take in some to the church here, and I’d like mighty well to have you among ’em.”

“All right, certainly,” said Tom, “if you wish it.” One of his traits was to fall in readily with all arguments or proposals made to him; this was as characteristic as his money-loving.

“You always was a good boy, Tom,” said his gratified uncle.

Tom called upon the minister and proposed to join the church. The minister talked long with him, in a curious state of perplexity. Tom said the proper thing in the most matter-of-fact way, as if he were stating points in geography or history.

“He seemed so quiet, had so little—little feeling,” said the pastor.

“It is his nature to be quiet and matter-of-fact,” said the pastor’s wife.

Tom had been well taught, and answered smoothly every question put to him.

“But he seems to have very little sense of sin,” said the pastor to an old member of the church.

“Well, Tom has been carefully shielded and guarded, and has fallen into no great

errors, and I suppose he has had very little to rouse him to anxiety or remorse."

"There was nothing to say why Tom should not be a member of the church, and in fact very little to say why he should. So Tom joined the church.

"So," cried Uncle Hiram, who was again on speaking terms with the lad, "you're going to waste your time and money going to school!"

"Not at all," replied Tom; "time and money spent in education bring always their own return."

"My proposal to you to come into the store is still open."

"After I get done going to school, if you offer me a fair salary, as much as I could get elsewhere, or at teaching, I'll consider it," returned Tom.

The academy was forty miles from Ryerson. Tom spent his terms in hard work, and his vacations with Uncle Nebby, working faithfully at gardening.

"Eddication set by," said Uncle Nebby,

“there’s nothing like gardening; bringing honestly out of God’s earth the good things he means for man’s use. I don’t hold to raising tobacco or opium out of the innocent ground for man’s destruction, as I hear they does in some places; the Scripture tells us of the earth being defiled by the inhabitants thereof, and it appears to me to take to making it bring forth poisons is a way to defile it, sure enough. No, Tom, I don’t hold by getting a living by anything whatsoever as injures our neighbor. It’s all a part of murder.”

At seventeen Tom left the academy, and as the schoolmaster at Ryreson was elderly, and the school was large, they opened an additional room and put Tom in charge. Uncle Nebby was overjoyed. “A schoolmaster, Tom!” he cried, “praise the Lord, it’s next thing to being a parson; it’s getting your living by doing good, and that’s the way to get it. Honest value, Tom, for honest money, eh?”

In the joy of his honest soul Uncle Nebby

expatiated in this fashion to all who looked over his fence for a talk. Among these Jean Clerc, the stage driver, who looking nothing older for eleven years wear, still held the reins of a new "Golden Fly," and gossipped twice a week with the Ryreson people about the outer world.

"It is a thing to praise the Lord for, Monshu Clerc," said Uncle Nebby, who thought it only polite to talk all the French he knew to Jean, "that the people in this valley have never given themselves to raising products poisonous to the bodies and souls of men. There's hops—we do grow a little hops, a few vines for yeast, and for medicine, there's none of it grows for brewers. There's a few acres of barley, mebbby five in the valley. Dr. Murtry he recommends it for young children, and I sells a few packages to 'pothecaries. Our fruit sir gets eaten out of hand or dried; we don't sell to distilleries, sir; our market's an' honest market, and bad luck to him as makes it otherwise."

“I brought Mr. Richardson to Ryreson this evening,” said Clerc; “he ees partner, now, but he travels in ze sommers too for hees health.”

“Eh? Then he’ll come and see me,” said Nebby, briskly; “he always comes to find out how Tom is doing, seeing he brought him here. I says to him, reg’lar, ‘You did me a main good turn by bringing that boy, Mr. Richardson,’ and I’ll say it now more than ever. He did the whole valley a good turn; why, all Ryreson’s proud of that boy of mine, Monshu Clerc!”

“Bon! It ees so; he has done well, he ees not a firebrand—so far,” said Clerc.

“Firebrand!” cried Nebby; “well, you are always saying that. His head’s not nigh so red as it was, and as for firebrand, he is a main good boy, Monshu.”

“That ees what I did say,” replied Clerc, calmly.

Next morning Mr. Hugh Richardson, stouter and older looking than when he

brought Tom to Ryreson, was leaning over Uncle Nebby's gate.

"Ah, sir," said the old man, "I'll venture you don't find a quieter, prettier place than this in all your travels."

"No," said Hugh; "and if it remains like this until I have made my fortune, I'll come and buy a place here, and settle with my wife and children. We'll have to have a good academy here, then; it is just the place for one, so safe and healthful."

"Exactly," said Uncle Nebby; "and I know a young man, who, if he keeps on as he has begun, will be able to take charge of that academy, and that's my Tom."

There was a sound of horses' feet. Hugh looked up, looked back, and looked again. Then said, in a low tone, "I say, North, Dr. Murtry don't drink, does he?"

"Bless me, no!" cried Nebby, looking up. "Not a man within a dozen miles drinks."

"But, look at him; he don't keep his seat; something is wrong," said Richardson, start-

ing toward the doctor's buggy. The doctor swayed to and fro, let fall the lines, and dropped backwards. Uncle Nebby and Hugh stopped the horse and lifted him down. The doctor was dead.

The doctor had led a quiet, laborious life, making little money. He may have had early debts to pay; however it was, it was found that beyond the house and lot and the furniture, he had left his child no property. Agnes stood alone without a known relative in the world. The case of this twelve year old child excited universal sympathy.

"She shall have all I've got," sobbed Nurse Ross, but Nurse had only six hundred dollars. "I'll work my fingers off for her," cried the nurse; "she's a little lady, and her mother was a lady, and a gentleman's daughter; a fine family, indeed, only for the accident that they fell to drinking, and her father and the doctor's father were partners in a distillery, and it burned up, and ruined them. No, I'll not let her want."

"She shall not want," said the minister;

“she must choose the squire for her guardian, and he’ll make some plan for her.”

The doctor was buried, the squire was chosen guardian; that is, Nurse Ross suggested it, and Agnes said “yes, she didn’t care—she didn’t care for anything.”

Then the squire, and the minister, and Nurse Ross went over the place, and made an inventory of everything. Meanwhile Agnes lay and cried on the lounge in the darkened sitting-room; the only thing that consoled her was when her old playmate and champion, Tom, sat by her and talked soothingly to her.

Then the squire, and the minister, and Nurse Ross, resolved themselves into a committee of ways and means. “The rent of the house will not nearly support her,” said the squire; “the best way will be to turn all the property into money, and use it in educating the child, and then she can be independent. Mistress Ross, you had best pack up the books, and the little silver and household linen, and store it in my attic, and

the rest we can sell, and put the child at an academy. I daresay we could keep her at one for five or six years, and then she can teach."

"But I canna be parted from my child," cried Mistress Ross, who fell into her Scotch talk when excited. "Wha would be fashed to mend and make her claes, and mind her when she's ailin', and care for my puir dearie, in the big schules!"

"I have a thought," said the minister; "could we not find a school for Agnes, where so competent a person as Mistress Ross could go as housekeeper, or nurse, or seamstress; some work, to be near the child? The pay might be small, but she would have her boarding."

"I'll work for naething to be near my bairnie," protested Nurse Ross.

"And you can both spend vacations with me; you will be kindly welcome," said the squire.

The plan was carried into effect. Hugh Richardson bought the house and suggested

the academy, and Mrs. Ross was engaged to take charge of the linen, the bedding and the sick-room. There was no coming to the squire's for vacations, though ; the academy was too far off. Nurse Ross's work occupied her there all the year round, and Agnes soon found friends near at hand to invite her for the holidays. The squire made the best of his ward's small inheritance, and found he could cover six years of schooling and clothing with what she had. Her few treasures lay year after year in the squire's attic. Hugh rented his house to the new doctor, and by degrees Agnes and her nurse began to fade out of the memory of Ryreson. Tom, perhaps, forgot soonest of all the little girl in black, and her red eyes and swollen, mottled face, whom he had handed into the stage one September morning.

And so five years went by, and even steady Tom, teaching the "primary" in the village school, began to weary for a change, and think he would like to see a little more of the world, if he could do it without losing

money. He had fallen into the habit of teaching, and he meant to keep on with that work until better offered.

“Keep to it always, lad,” urged Uncle Nebby; “then you’ll earn your bread doing good in the world.”

It was Jean Clerc, who brought news of a town fifty miles away, where there were three grades in the village school, and a master was wanted for the second. The salary was ten dollars a month more; the town was larger, and it “would give Tom a change, and a lift all at the one time,” said Uncle Nebby.

Unselfishly the old man bade his nephew go. Tom never once thought that the little gray gardener would be lonely, and if Uncle Nebby thought it he did not say it. Tom was now twenty-two and past, and Uncle Nebby was sure he could take care of himself. Away Tom went. He studied some, taught pretty faithfully, made friends, saved his money, was respected. This was the story until the spring of his second year at

Combletown. On an April day in that second year, Tom met on the street of Combletown, a comely, elderly woman, with a basket on her arm. She eyed him closely, and then holding out a friendly hand, cried:

“Hech! an’ this is surely Tom Beck!”

“Yes, I am,” said Tom, slowly; “why! Nurse Ross, this is you!”

“Deed it is, and you are here! Teaching in yon school you juist cam frae? Long are the days since we werè at Ryreson.”

“And where is Agnes?” said Tom, politely. “Is she well?”

“Well and happy, an’ will be main glad to see you for an auld frien’. She has the school two mile fra town, an’ we have a bit housie nigh the schule, an’ I keep the house, as ye see,” and she shook her market basket, on her stout arm. “You’ll come an’ see us shortly, now?”

“Indeed I will; to-morrow evening,” cried Tom.

So Tom went to spend his first Saturday evening with Agnes in the little white dwell-

ing near where she taught the country school. The little heart-broken, red-eyed girl had grown to the tall, healthful, handsome, bright-spirited young woman. It was natural that she having almost no friends in her new home, should welcome Tom, the ally of her happy early days. It was natural that Tom should enjoy the company of a girl better read and educated than the other girls about him, engaged in the same duties as himself, and associated with all his happy home life. He came and came again; every Saturday, and soon every Sunday must be spent at the little white cot. Nurse Ross looked on well pleased. Had not Tom always had the good word of every one who knew him? Was he not thrifty, industrious and money-making? Was it not far better that her Agnes should be courted and married, than that she should go on teaching for years and be left alone in the world when Nurse Ross died? To be sure it was.

But none of these thoughts entered the heads of Tom and Agnes. They were happy,

and lived in the present, and did not look forward. After the long day in the din of the school-room, came the pleasant evening meal spread by Nurse Ross, where there were often three at the table; then there were walks in the green lanes, where dandelions and violets were followed by golden snap-dragon, and blue pentstemon, and white clumps of asters, and daisies and yarrow, and these by masses of pink roses running over the stone walls, and cockle, putting its purple face through the fence rails. The turf grew velvety under foot, the trees were broad-foliaged overhead, the birds sang of perpetual youth time, and health and ease, freedom and happiness. Spring would last forever, or if it changed would change to summer fulness and splendor. It was the old, bright story, new to every generation, an idyl that more than Nurse Ross might look on with complaisance. Here were two whose lives had been simple and innocent, who had no wild ambitions, no subjects for remorse; no great temptations

had met or subdued them; well-matched in age, and fair to look upon; they, as the summer grew in beauty, grew to frankly loving and trusting each other.





## CHAPTER III.

### THE HEIR AND HIS OWN.

“Turn, turn, my wheel! All life is brief;  
What now is bud, will soon be leaf;  
What now is leaf will soon decay:  
The wind blows east, the wind blows west;  
The blue eggs in the robin’s nest  
Will soon have wings, and beak, and breast,  
And flutter and fly away.”

**T**OM went home for a very short vacation that summer. He did not want to leave the circle lit by Agnes’ shining eyes, so he exerted himself to find occupation for holiday time. Then he went to Uncle Nebby for a fortnight. He excused his short stay on the score of some book-keeping for a Combletown firm. “I must make all I can, uncle,” said he. “By-and-by you will be old and give up work, and then I must have a snug little harbor

for you, where you can have everything to your mind." He did not mention Agnes, but he secretly thought what a "snug harbor" it would be indeed, with Agnes for the presiding spirit, and where Uncle Nebby and Nurse Ross could dwell in old-time friendship, chatting, through their resting hours, of the former days, while he and Agnes talked of the new. Age is ever looking back, while youth looks forward. Then school opened again, and autumn brought its fruits, and the winter seemed a very bright and genial time to these two young people, and there was a vacation at Christmas, and they concluded it was proper for them to pay a visit to Ryreson, and make a few remarks on their prospects to Uncle Nebby and guardian Squire Judd.

As Jean Clerc conveyed Agnes and Tom on the last stage of their journey to Ryreson, he gave many satisfied glances at his passengers, as betimes he caught a glimpse of them, shut in the coach from the Christmas cold. He saw with pleasure Agnes kindly

received by Squire Judd's family, who were gathered in the porch ; and with still greater pleasure he saw Nebby North trotting down his newly-shovelled garden path, to greet his nephew.

"Welcome, welcome to you, my boy!" cried Nebby, "and where is *she*?"

"Oh," said Tom, laughing, and grasping his uncle's hand, "she is at Squire Judd's, of course ; and you will go there with me to see her this evening, wont you, uncle?"

"To be sure, to be sure!" said Nebby, helping Tom take off his overcoat, and putting him in the warmest corner by the blazing wood fire ; and then seating himself opposite, he gazed at his nephew with admiring eyes. "And so, you're going to be married, Tom?"

"Well, not right away. I hope you approve of it, uncle?"

"Certainly I do," said the old man. "I've no doubt Dr. Murtry's girl is a fine young woman ; and to marry is the course of nature, and what I have always allowed to

be proper. I wonder why I didn't marry myself; but you are more enterprising than I am—always was, Tom, and I'm glad of it, so long as you don't enterprise into any wrong way," he added, shrewdly.

"Oh, there's no danger of that, uncle," answered confident Tom. Tom was always so blandly sure of himself.

All Ryreson took a kindly interest in the affairs of Tom and Agnes; the stage had scarcely deposited them at their respective homes, than every one knew their whole story; and this not in the way of inquisitive gossip, but of sympathetic friendship; it is a fashion of Arcadia which the world in general has grown out of. This interest was indicated during the week of their stay by numerous invitations to dinner and tea, and these included Uncle Nebby—for as we have said, in Ryreson all people lived on a social equality—and they were warmly accepted by the young folks, who naturally are fond of social pleasures. The girls who had been Agnes' friends in childhood made

her a gorgeous album quilt in red and white, and there was a grand quilting occasion, and the young men brought teams, and there was a moonlight sleigh-ride after the quilt was "out." It must have been truly agreeable to live in Ryreson in those days.

Among other places, Tom dropped in at Uncle Hiram's store. They both sedulously ignored all relationship. Tom called Hiram "Mr. Beck," and Hiram called him "Tom North!"

"So," quoth the storekeeper, "you're going to make a fool of yourself, getting married?"

"I think it is the wisest thing I could do," said Tom.

"You'd better think it over again," said Hiram; "if you tie yourself to a wife, you lose your chance of making money, and are on the road to pauperism. What has a man making twenty-eight dollars a month, to do with a wife? What will he do with half a dozen babies, coming close on each other's heels? He'll be a beggar!"

Now Tom was willing to justify himself; he thought himself also an astute planner, and was ready to display his means and his foresight, so he made answer: "We will not be so badly off as you fancy, Mr. Beck. I have enough laid by to pay my house rent, and put in fuel for a year, and buy a little new furniture, and still have two hundred dollars in the bank; and Agnes has her furniture and household stuff. I shall go on teaching where I am, and maybe doing a little clerking in vacations; and Agnes is going to keep her school, too, and Mistress Ross will live with us, and mind our house economically, so we shall do very well."

"And how long will this teaching by both hold out?" sneered Uncle Hiram.

"I'm sure I don't know," said Tom; "when it stops I shall work a little harder."

"Pooh! marry in haste, repent at leisure," said Hiram.

"I'm twenty-four, and that is old enough," said Tom.

"Well, fools won't be advised. However,

when you get to the end of your tether and cast yourself, don't look to me."

"Be sure," retorted Tom, "that I shall never look to strangers for anything." And he stalked out of the store with his head held high and a red face. That was the last time he ever spoke to Hiram Beck.

"A very nice couple," said the minister's wife, as Tom and Agnes walked by; "they have every prospect of good fortune. It is a pleasure to see a Christian young couple set up for themselves."

"I cannot make up my mind," said the pastor, with a puzzled air, "whether Tom is a Christian; he is a very moral young man, and seems uncommonly thrifty and well satisfied with himself. I often doubt whether his religion is anything more than careful bringing up, and freedom from temptation; it may be moral habit, rather than religious principle. And I should say the same about Agnes; two very nice young people, who have never yet fallen upon such times as try men's souls; and how they will stand such times, who can tell?"

“Let us hope for the best for them,” said the lady.

“Certainly, and pray for them also. But it seems to me that Tom Beck’s genius lies especially in the line of thrift—of worldly success; the idea of growing in grace has not fixed itself in his mind. He seems to feel, though he does not say, that he *is* grown. I look on him with anxiety, lest the God of this world should ‘blind his eyes and harden his heart.’ Agnes seems also to be greatly influenced by him in all things: unconsciously she is moulded by his opinions and grows into his habits of thought.”

“Had you not better talk with him on this subject?”

“I have, repeatedly: he assents readily to all that I say—he always did—that is one of Tom’s traits. But as for impression, there is no impression. You might as well pour water on a duck’s back!”

“Perhaps you would effect more if you made the water a little hotter,” said the minister’s wife.

The Christmas vacation was over, and Tom and Agnes went back to work. Time flowed pleasantly on for them ; the short winter days, and the long winter evenings, brought their toil and their recreation.

Nurse Ross knitted and stitched on her idol's wedding outfit, a modest little trousseau, but suitable, and likely to be very becoming, worn by so pretty a maiden. Then spring came, and hedge-rows were green, and school closed on the last day of April, and Nurse Ross locked up the cottage, which was henceforth to be more of a home than ever ; and then with Tom and Agnes took her way to Ryreson for the wedding.

The "Golden Fly" carried the happy three to Squire Judd's gate, and Jean Clerc was bidden be back the second day after for the marriage occasion. Hugh Richardson and his wife were there too. They were visiting, for a time, the doctor who had come in Dr. Murtry's room.

It was a very nice wedding. Uncle Nebby made the rooms a perfect bower of

blossoms, and gave the bride a twenty dollar gold piece and a family Bible. Everybody in town wanted to send a wedding cake to Agnes. Squire Judd gave her a receipted bill for two nice sets of blue and white crockery, which had been bought, and were waiting her at Combletown. The minister's wife said she had never seen so fine looking a young couple in her twenty years life at Ryreson. Miller Ryreson, who was old, and had buried his two children, said he wished Tom were his son, or could buy out the mill property and succeed him as miller.

The bridegroom laughed at this. "It will be long, father Ryreson, before I have three thousand laid up to buy a property."

"I should love above all things to live here," said Agnes.

In fact everybody came to the wedding and congratulated the pair, except Uncle Hiram. He said that "the world got fuller of nonsense every year."

"Tom," said Agnes, when seated in the "Golden Fly," after two weeks stay at Ryre-

son, "wouldn't it be nice if you did have money enough to buy the mill property and go live at Ryreson?"

"Very nice, but not likely to be," said Tom. Then he fell into a muse, and after a while, tired of sitting in the stage, he proposed to Agnes to walk up a hill.

"Agnes," he said, "old miller may grind there for ten years yet; perhaps if we have luck and save something every year, I might buy the mill some day. Uncle Nebby has something laid by, and I might get him to go in with me, or have him lend it to me at interest, and Ryreson could have a mortgage on the property. It would be worth thinking of; milling is a very respectable business. And yet, Agnes, if I ever did have money to invest, I think I'd like a business with larger profits and quicker returns, than milling in a country village like Ryreson."

"It is honest and safe, at all events," said Agnes.

"Nothing venture, nothing have," laughed Tom.

But at present this young couple had only two hundred dollars in bank, a few dollars in pocket, and Uncle Nebby's gold piece.

"Man proposes, and God disposes," says the proverb; but Tom's proposing seemed to have run closely in the line of God's disposing, so entirely were his plans carried out.

Nurse Ross kept the house; Tom taught as before in Combletown, and Agnes had her little country school, a stone's throw from the house where they continued to abide. Uncle Nebby came and spent Christmas with them; and though from narrowness of quarters, the house having but four rooms, the old man slept on a lounge bed in the sitting room, he was charmed with all that he saw and heard. His eyes dwelt with delight on Tom as the head of a family. He thought Agnes a wonderful little woman. Nurse Ross kept a tidy house and gossiped hour after hour of past, present and future, with the guest. Truly the old man thought that the lines had fallen to his boy in pleasant places. There was only one thing that troubled him.

“My lad, you don’t have family prayers.”

“But uncle, I never could pray in public.”

“Well, this ain’t in public, Tom, it’s private.”

“I mean before anybody—and we do just as well; we all say our prayers for ourselves.”

“And yet that aint doing the whole duty, my lad; we are bound to honor God as families when we are families. You mind, the minister put that to you at the wedding.”

“I know he did; but we don’t all think alike, uncle.”

“But boy, you don’t object to family prayer!”

“Certainly not, but I can’t take it up, somehow.”

“Look you, my lad; if the Lord sends you children, would you go on having no family prayer, no family religion?”

“Oh, well, then — why, probably I’d do differently,” mumbled Tom, embarrassed.

“Better begin right, and then you will keep right.”

“But, but — we have begun already, you see.”

“Then we’ll begin over again. I’ll have prayers while I am here, and that will start you right; and you’ll keep it up when I’m gone, and a blessing at the table. I don’t like your kind of blessing, my boy; you all hold your heads down, and whether you are thanking the Lord, or merely looking at your plates, only the Lord knows. I like a real out-and-outer for a blessing.”

“Well, thank your very much, uncle, for taking hold of the matter,” said Tom.

Uncle Nebby accordingly “took hold” of Tom’s family religion, and had what he called an “out-and-out” blessing, and inaugurated family worship. The good old man began to initiate Tom in his duty by first asking him to read the Scripture. Tom assented, and read it very well. Next Uncle Nebby asked him to pray.

“I’d rather hear you, uncle, you leave so soon,” said Tom, with the greatest politeness.

Uncle Nebby highly enjoyed his visit, and

went off feeling that he had begun a good work in the new household. But alas—after he left there was no more an audible grace before meat, no family worship.

Nurse Ross said Uncle Nebby's 'ways were very nice ways, and what were to be expected of a man of his age; but Tom was young, and would take to those things when he grew older.'

The next event of importance in Tom's family history was the arrival of a small stranger, who, coming without letters of recommendation, or personal belongings of any kind, was yet received with hospitality by the whole family. This baby showed himself a person of excellent judgment and feeling from the very first. He interfered with nobody's business. School closed the middle of April; he appeared in July, when no one had anything to do but to receive him. He was quiet, and fat, and tractable from the first; alarmed no one by his tricks and manners, demanded no medicine and no doctors, and Nurse Ross said, 'except his mother,

he was the finest child she had ever seen."

Tom showed his shrewdness when it came to naming the child. "Squire Judd has no boys," he said; "let us call him Judd."

He announced the new arrival to the squire, and to Uncle Nebby. To the latter he wrote, "We named him for the squire, to whom Agnes feels under many obligations; we would have liked to name him for you, uncle, but Nebuchadnezzar is a long name for so small a personage, and somewhat old-fashioned." He ignored the fact that North was a better name than Judd.

Uncle Nebby was satisfied. Squire Judd wrote a civil letter containing his congratulations. Uncle Nebby sent a wide sheet with his blessing carefully scrawled therein, and an earnest warning to train the child in the ways of the Lord. He sent also a five dollar bill, "to get the child something."

Inspired by new demands upon him, our industrious Tom worked all vacation at clerking or book-keeping, and in September he and Agnes both resumed their schools.

Nurse Ross said she had plenty of time to tend the baby, and Agnes came home at noon, and at morning and afternoon recess, to bestow his meals upon this right-minded infant.

The little family had talked of going to Ryreson at Christmas, but when the time came, Tom did not like to incur the expense, so he hinted to Agnes that a long stage ride might give the baby a cold, and Agnes at once felt sure that it *would* give him a cold; so they sent again for Uncle Nebby to come and sleep on the lounge bed. The gardener came with alacrity; and now knowing his views, Tom steered clear of all difficulties by asking him to say grace, and lead worship, and Uncle Nebby considered that these were daily practices in Tom's house. Who was likely to tell him otherwise?

Blessed days of early courage and endurance, when the future holds everything to hope for, and all our lives lie before us with their possibilities! Tom and Agnes felt that they might live in the light of almost

any coming good. They might make a fortune. Tom might become a member of Congress. They might build an elegant house, and keep a carriage—all things might be—and there were so many pleasant things that were. Tom laid up eighty dollars. The baby could sit alone—the baby had a tooth! When the anemones waved lightly in April breezes, and sanguinaria spread out great white stars above the last year's dead leaves, school closed, and Agnes thought she would have a lovely summer, with nothing to do but stay at home and make the baby some short clothes.

She was sitting about six o'clock one afternoon, undressing the baby. Tom had gone to the village for some groceries, and to inquire casually for the mail, which never brought them anything.

By-and-by Tom came back, stepping briskly and slamming the gate after him. Agnes, admiring her child, who clad only in his shirt, sat fat, white and dimpled on her lap, and Nurse Ross admiring mother and

child, did not notice that Tom had an open letter. He dropped his basket.

“Agnes!” he cried, excitedly, “Agnes! I have a letter from Squire Judd.”

“Well, nothing is the matter, I hope?” said Agnes, patting the baby’s plump neck.

“No—that is nothing especial, that is—Uncle Hiram’s dead!”

“Oh, poor man!” said Agnes, looking up. “I fear he was not prepared to die.”

“Ah—yet he was old enough. I hope he was ready.”

There was such a ring of absolute joy in Tom’s tone that Agnes looked up horrified.

“Why, Tom! you are not glad the poor man is gone!”

“He never treated me so I should be sorry,” said Tom, hanging his head, a little abashed.

“You got on well enough without him, and you should not be glad of his death,” said Agnes, still playing with her child, while she acted the mentor.

“Agnes!” cried Tom, yet in jubilant tones,

“Uncle Hiram was rich ; he left money ; seven thousand dollars — seven thousand dollars !”

“Did he? Well, he wouldn’t leave you any, would he?”

“Not a cent,” said Tom, ecstatically, and then burst out, “but I’ve got it—I’ve got it all! He couldn’t help himself—it’s mine, every cent!”

“Oh, Tom,” exclaimed Agnes, now fairly distracted from her living plaything. “What do you mean?”

“Just what I say,” shouted Tom ; “he made no will, he hated to think of dying, and he dropped off suddenly ; and I’m next of kin. I’m heir at law ! Squire Judd wrote me, Uncle Hiram dropped off quite suddenly, and all he left is mine ; there are a few debts for goods, and the funeral expenses, and a grave stone, and a few things like that, and then all I have to do is to go and take the money. Seven thousand dollars ! I tell you, Agnes, now we are rich !”

Nurse Ross sprung up in high glee ; she

snatched the half-naked babe, and tossed him crowing over her head, until he nearly touched the low ceiling. Agnes leaped from her chair, dropping the babe's little clothes from her lap, and seized Tom's hand, and Tom caught Agnes round the waist and kissed her, and vociferated that 'now they could do a thing or two, and show what they were made of.'

And so, Hiram Beck had spent his whole life slowly picking up dollar by dollar of this seven thousand odd, and now, he lay dead, unwept; and this Tom, the last man in the world whom he meant should have it, had heired the whole, and was shouting in jubilant pride over his new possession. The surprised heir had come into his own.





## CHAPTER IV.

### WHAT HE DID WITH IT.

“ Turn, turn my wheel ! This earthen jar,  
A touch can make, a touch can mar ;  
    And shall it to the Potter say,  
What makest thou ? Thou hast no hand ?  
As men who think to understand  
A world by their Creator planned—  
    Who wiser is than they.”



“ COME, come,” cried Nurse Ross, “ this is gey, fine news ! Now Agnes, you can live more as a child of the Murtrys and the Thompsons has a right to do ; no more slavin’ in yon school wi’ ither people’s bairns.”

Agnes had never felt her teaching a burden, but all at once it looked to her a dull and slavish life, and she said heartily, “ No, indeed !”

“Here, my dear,” continued Mistress Ross, “tak’ the babie an’ put him to sleep, whiles I get up a tidy little supper in honor o’ your fortin’; aye, we’ll ha’ a supper as we did in the old kintra in yer grandther’s times.”

Agnes took her boy and sat rocking him in a low chair by the doorway. Tom, at her feet, leaned his head back on the door post, and looked his mad delight over his new fortune; while Nurse Ross ran to her chicken yard for a young fowl, to the cellar for a dish of honey from a solitary bee hive, and prepared to fry a chicken, and make some scones.

“I suppose, Tom,” said Agnes, “that you won’t teach school any more?”

“Not I,” said Tom. “Money is made to make money: when a body gets a tidy bit of cash like this, then they must use it to get more, until they are rich. Why, Agnes, what are seven thousand dollars? A mere drop in the bucket compared to the fortunes people can make. Why, in the cities, folks have fifty, a hundred, five hundred thousand dol-

lars—yes, even a million! I've always been poor, but I've always made up my mind to die rich. Of course, if money is good, more of it is better; and the most you can get is the best of all. You see—a great deal of good can be done with money,"—he added, mindful of the proprieties of his church membership. "A man who has a big fortune can be a great benefit to his whole neighborhood. Why, with such a fortune as some men have, I might be the making of all Ryreson."

"Yes, indeed," said Agnes; "now you can show people what you can do;" and she looked with great pride at Tom, regarding him as a man of enterprise and spirit, a moneyed man, with splendid financiering abilities.

"You see, Agnes," continued Tom, over whose uplifted face the setting sun suddenly threw a broad crimson light, such as lay long ago on Ryreson's creek and meadow, "every man should put his wife and children in just as good a position as he possibly can.

Here's this boy of ours; he will need a deal of money to send him through college, and set him up in the world, and he may have brothers and sisters, who will need as much more. I look at this seven thousand as a mere nest egg, around which to gather many other thousands."

"Aye, aye, Mr. Tom," said Nurse Ross, stopping as she laid the table for the supper. "That's the way to talk. I mind when old Mr. Murtry could ha' bought oot all Ryreson, and Mr. Thompson had as fine a carriage as ane wad wish t' see!"

"But, Nurse dear," said Agnes, looking up, "you never said much to me about that splendor, and what became of it. Why did you not tell me more than hints?"

"Whaur was the good, dearie, when all was gone, to vex you wi' what might ha' bin? Na, na, I just let things gang their ain gait wi' ye, sae lang as ye waur happy. But I'll tell ye the noo, an' Mr. Tom as weel, sae ye may baith ken what belongs to the family; and dinna ye be hinderin' Mr. Tom in makin'

a gay fortin' for ye, noo he has the chance."

"O, I shall not," cried Agnes, eagerly; "but how will you do it, Tom, dear; how will you use your money?"

"I must think carefully over it," said Tom.

"Would you buy a farm?"

"No," returned Tom, heartily, "I hate farming; I never took to digging as Uncle Nebby does, and farming brings slow gains. I wouldn't reach ten thousand in an age."

"Perhaps you might keep on with the store, just as it stands."

"I might," said cautious Tom; "but then, I know nothing about storekeeping; the trade there is small. It took Uncle Hiram all his life to lay up seven thousand. Of course I should do better than he did; he was too narrow in his views to gain largely. He stood in his own light; but the store would be a slow road to fortune, in so small a town."

"There's the mill, Tom!" cried Agnes; "such a pretty old stone mill, and perhaps

you could buy the house as well, the nicest house in the village," she added, with some satisfaction.

"Yes, the mill's a very good one, and going cheap; but milling, as I told you before, is a slow business, and a man don't make a fortune at country milling. However, we'll see."

"You'll have to go to Ryreson. We'll all go, and have a visit. We can stop at the hotel," said Agnes, with pleasure in the thought of being able to do as she liked, and make a good figure before old friends. Seven thousand was a very pretty fortune, measured by a Ryreson standard. Why only Squire Judd and Mr. Ryreson had more! "And Tom, when we are there, you can look the matter over, and take advice from Squire Judd and Uncle Nebby."

"Well, yes," said Tom, "I can; but, Agnes, they know very little about making money. They have never handled much, or made much. They are all decidedly slow,

and I fancy they wont be able to give much light to me."

Tom was unfolding his self-confidence and self-consequence at a wonderful rate, under this new sunshine of prosperity! Agnes went to lay her sleeping child on the lounge, and came back and sat by Tom on the door sill. "You know, Tom, some people, in trying to make more, lose all they have. I hope you wont do that. Although we have only had this money less than two hours, it seems to me already as if I could not get along without it."

"Don't be a goose, Agnes," said Tom, "thinking I shall waste it. Did you ever know me to lose any money?"

"No, but you have always been in work that you knew about, and where you risked nothing."

"So I shall be still, you'll see; it will all come out right."

Here Nurse Ross called them to supper. All three sat down, and according to custom, bent their heads over their plates; but all

three were thinking of seven thousand dollars, instead of grace. At the table Nurse Ross gave them the history of the Murtrys and the Thompsons. These respective grandparents of Agnes, had begun life by keeping a wine and liquor store in Glasgow; shrewd business men, they had prospered, and had gone into wholesale business, and had built a distillery, and placed the store under the same roof. Money had rolled in on them—they had lived high. Mr. Thompson's children had all been delicate, and only Agnes' mother lived to grow up. Old Mr. Murtry's eldest son "didna' do weel, puir lad, he had a high speerit, an' he took to drinking. He was aye good-natured, an' he made debts for his puir faither wi'out knawin' hoo he did't. Atweel! he wint awa' to Indie, an' was ne'er heard o' mair."

The eldest daughter had married well enough, but she died in Glasgow the year before Dr. Murtry died in Ryreson. Mr. Thompson's daughter married Mr. Murtry's only remaining son, the doctor. The night

of the wedding proved unlucky. Nurse Ross did not know how it was; possibly the watchman at the distillery took too much drinking of healths to the bride and groom; at all events there was a cry of fire at day-break, and before nine o'clock the distillery and warehouse were crumbled into ashes.

“Wae’s me!” sighed Nurse Ross; “a distillery is a gay fine way to make a fortin’, but it burns beyant onything when it taks fire!”

With the fire fell the fortunes of Murtry and Thompson. Old Mr. Murtry found that his elder son had involved him far beyond his computation. Loss and chagrin overcame him. He took to his bed and died in a month. He had long been a widower. The small remains of his estate were divided between Dr. Murtry and his married sister, and the doctor set off for America to practice his profession. He had drifted, by the advice of a New York doctor, related to Squire Judd, into Ryreson. Mr. Thompson had promised to follow his daughter in a

year to America. The ship which carried himself and wife had been lost. The news reached Mrs. Murtry when Agnes was a month old; it preyed upon her mind, until it threw her into a fever, of which she died. Nurse Ross had accompanied Dr. and Mrs. Murtry from Glasgow, and brooding much over former glories, had said little about them.

“‘Deed, Agnes,” said she, “I wint to live wi’ yer grandmither, I bein a slip of a girlie an’ yer mither a babie in lang claes. I carried her ’roun frae morn till nicht, an’ I loo’d her weel. It’s always gang to me heart to hae ye wearin’ yer life oot teachin’, but I aye said to mysel’, ‘What canna be cured maun be endured.’ An noo, Mr. Tom, an’ ye use yer money weel, ye may bring back in this fine new kintra all the fortin’ yer boy’s great grandfaithers had an’ lost.”

This discourse of Nurse Ross stirred Tom and Agnes to a greater desire of increasing their capital. It seemed somehow as if they had a right to riches; that they had all these

years been heirs nefariously dispossessed of their own, and that now their chief duty was to pursue the golden road to pecuniary recovery. The last words of Tom to Agnes that night were, "I tell you, wife, I'm bound to make money, somehow."

The ceremony of waiting for Tom's arrival before Uncle Hiram was buried, had been dispensed with at Ryreson; in fact Uncle Hiram was in his grave before Squire Judd's letter was off to the heir. That Tom must go to Ryreson to attend to his business was evident, and that he would no more return to Comletown was also evident. Early the morning after his good news, Tom repaired to the trustees of his and Agnes' schools, and requested them to find other teachers for the ensuing year. He gave up the house, which was rented by the month, and finding that he could not sell his household goods to advantage, engaged a wagon and a team of mules to carry them over to Ryreson.

"They can be packed in the back room

of the store, where Uncle Hiram used to live, until we know what we want, or down at Uncle Nebby's. I've about made up my mind not to run that store. Squire Judd said Uncle Hiram had been ailing for six months, and had let the stock run down, and the hotel keeper's son talked of starting a better one. I'll sell out to him. I don't want the store."

"And when shall we move?" demanded Agnes, all alert for change.

"The sooner the better," put in Nurse Ross, who was doing the family ironing. "Then ye can know hoo to turn yer'sels, an' the sooner get yer money to growin'."

For the next two days, preparations for departure were hastened. Nurse Ross had her hens and bees to sell. The meagre but neat furniture was packed; everybody's best clothes were put in the best order. Nurse Ross elected to go to Ryreson with the goods. She could ride on the wagon seat with the driver. Tom, Agnes and the baby took the stage, and on the morning of the

third day, they were off. At Ryreson, the squire, the minister and Uncle Nebby each wanted a few days' visit, and Tom and Agnes went from one place to another, feeling very happy, and not a little consequential, as people of property. Tom was overwhelmed with advice.

"Whatever you do, my boy," said Uncle Nebby, "do right. I'd be for buying a farm; there's nought like honest gains from honest ground. Howsomever, do as you please, so you do no harm to your neighbor, and conduct yourself like a servant of the Lord."

"Well, Monsieur Tom," cried Jean Clerc of the "Golden Fly," "you have come into ze monais of ze man who did reject you. Now, Monsieur Tom, ees ze day when you shall show what ees een your heart. Ze monais ees ze exorcism which do bring out of one man's heart what thing ees there, good angels or leetle diables. Monais ees ze spark, we shall see eef eet prove you—ze firebrand."

“I hope to do something for my own good, and for the good of Ryreson, Mr. Clerc,” said Tom, with the dignity proper to a man of some means and more expectations.

The minister and the miller advised Tom to buy the mill and the mill property, and lead a peaceful life in that reasonable and useful occupation.

“There is no risk in it,” said the minister; “it brings a sure, comfortable support; you will have a handsome surplus in bank after you have paid for the property. Milling will be a good business to bring your son up to; and if he prefers education, you will be able to give it to him. Hugh Richardson is building a pretty house and means to move here, and we are thinking of a stock company to build an academy. It is a nice, safe place, for a boys’ or girls’ school.”

Squire Judd thought it was time Ryreson was waking up. The water power was good. The town needed more enterprise. The small saw mill might be enlarged, and its trade greatly increased; and the squire

thought a good cloth factory would be profitable. He was ready to put a couple of thousand in a cloth factory. There were some sheep kept within twenty miles, and there might be many more, and cloth brought a good price. Tom could get a foreman and could study up the business, and he was so sharp he might make discoveries in dyes, and so on. The factory would bring hands to live at Ryreson, and hands would want houses, and the lumber mill could saw up the stuff for the houses, and the more people the more trade for the flour mill."

Tom's head was nearly turned. The farm and the store he rejected decidedly. He sold out Uncle Hiram's stock and the store building to Peters, the hotel keeper's son, and took a mortgage. He paid Uncle Hiram's funeral expenses, and bought a gravestone; it was not a very good stone, but Tom said "it was good enough for Uncle Hiram," and maybe that was true. Some folks thought it "looked rather stingy in Tom, to put up a twenty-five dollar stone, when he had so

much money from the old man;" but Tom said he "believed Uncle Hiram would rise out of his grave in horror at the extravagance of a costly headstone;" "and I don't want him walking about and meddling with what I do with his money," laughed Tom.

"Oh, shame on you, Tom," said Agnes.

"Thomas!" cried Uncle Nebby, with great severity, "I don't hold to making game of the dead, nor to lightly remarking of their errors. I tell you, Thomas, that when a man's dead, his errors have come to be a serious matter to him, and we ought all to see to it that we leave off ours with humble penitence in this life; and I am afraid there's a very hard streak in you, somewhere, Thomas."

Now this was the first time in all his life that Uncle Nebby had called his nephew "Thomas," and it denoted that he was very wroth indeed.

"I'm like the old man, and the boy, and the donkey, in Æsop's fables, in the way of getting advice," said Tom to Agnes. "I

should change forty times in a week if I did all I'm advised to do. I tell you, Agnes, I shall go to New York and talk with people there who know something about money and business. Hugh Richardson will introduce me. I like this cloth factory idea, but I must know what it will cost, and what it will bring, and how the market stands, and what contracts I can make. And I'll tell you, Agnes, we have never had a journey, and you shall go with me. After I settle down we must stick to making money, but we will have one outing first."

"But, there's the baby," objected Agnes.

Nurse Ross overruled this objection.

"See ye the noo, Agnes," she said, "the child maun be weaned; it is time for't, an' it winna hurt him a hair, strong as he is, to wean him in the summer, not if I mind him. Dear knaws, I brought you up by han', an' ye were a hearty bairn. Gang awa to New York wi' yer husband, an' hae yer fling, like ither young folk; ye'll keep him oot o' mis-

chief in they city. An' I'll bide wi' Uncle Nebby, an' wean the bairn."

Behold then Agnes and Tom in New York. That was almost forty years ago, and at that time there stood on a corner of Reade Street, a small hotel, called "The Farmer's Home." It was a clean place, reasonable in prices, and here Tom went for his few days' stay in the city. "The Farmer's Home" had its bar, of course, and opening from the bar, a little parlor, where the male guests gathered with their pipes, their glasses of ale, or of whiskey and water, and talked news and business. It was a quiet enough place; no one got drunk or misdemeaned himself; everybody merely did as his neighbors did. The first evening Tom read the paper, listened to what was going on, and "for politeness' sake," sipped about a table-spoonful of a glass of brandy and water. He made the acquaintance of a man of thirty, a knowing man, named Waller. Of a fluent tongue and showy dress, this man attracted Tom's notice by his free-and-easy, "at

home" ways. Tom, the countryman, was stunned by the tumult of the city, the excitement of his journey, the numbers at the hotel, which, while small in reality, seemed enormous to him. He envied this Waller, joking with landlord and waiters, and seeming to know everybody's business, and competent to give an opinion on everything; the weather, the crops, the commerce, the political situation, all were airily commented on by the learned Waller. Before long he asked Tom where he came from. Yes, Waller had been in that part of the country once, "looking round," not exactly in Ryreson, or Kenville, or Combletown, but near them all, and he inquired into their prospects, products and property with affectionate solicitude, as if they were members of his family. He was interested in Tom's being a 'new man' in New York, and he had his wife with him? Mr. Waller's wife was with him. She knew the city. She would be charmed to make Mrs. Beck's acquaintance and take her round. Waller's prescient eye discerned in Tom the

pedagogue, and the decent church member. How were schools up his way? Waller was a great friend of schools; 'our schools, sir, are the hope of our country;' and what kind of preaching do you get? Yes, very fair, no doubt—splendid opportunities for usefulness these parsons had. Waller was almost sorry he had not been a parson—(and in view of his future, I am sorry too)—didn't know what folks would do without parsons, 'they were the hope of the country.' Here Waller's glass was empty. 'Would Mr. Beck join him in taking something?' Mr. Beck pointed to his nearly full glass to signify that he had rather more than enough at present.

"Perhaps you'd prefer beer?"

No, Tom said, he did not use beer; in fact Tom said 'he did not care for that sort of thing.'

Neither did Mr. Waller—invaluable medicine—also a prodigious poison, if people didn't know how to handle it. Something like gunpowder — useful and dangerous.

Waller took a little, out of civility, to help digestion, and to keep out cold, or to give a proper tone to his system, when he had pursued his occupation—which seemed to be ‘looking round’—too zealously. People in this house used the good things of this life without abusing them, never made beasts of themselves. Mr. Waller had particular objection to people making beasts of themselves. Mr. Waller interspersed his remarks by shouting out to the comers and goers, inquiring with interest as to their various speculations and practices. ‘How was the paper trade?’ ‘Mr. West, have you concluded to take that wheat?’ ‘Mr. Grant, there’s nothing equal to the iron trade, as you know, sir; if we go on, as Detmold, and Ross Winans, and some others are going on, in roads and engines, and so on, every iron man would be a money king, sir, a king!’

All this talk impressed Tom greatly. Did Mr. Waller know anything about milling? Mr. Waller had looked into it a little—he had never followed it. The lumber trade?

Well, he had been up in western Pennsylvania 'looking round' at the lumber business. Cloth factories — what did he know about them? Mr. Waller knew a good deal about them—he had looked into their operations—in fact all business was good wherein a man put energy, and business tact, and a little money; some departments were better than others; but we were entering sir, upon an era of unexampled commercial prosperity, about to make it the rule for our grandchildren to be millionaires; manufacturers, sir, 'were the hope of the country.'

Tom said he thought so too. He had come to the city to see what kind of business would suit him best for the investment of a little money. So the two agreed that they would meet at the seven o'clock breakfast and introduce the ladies to each other, and talk over business; and Mr. Waller remarked that all the information which he had gathered in a pretty general 'looking around,' was at Tom's disposal. They separated at ten o'clock, and Tom told

Agnes, when he went up-stairs, that he had found a man that he thought would be uncommonly useful to him—knew everything.

“You had better make some inquiries about him,” said Agnes. Tom had—he had asked the hotel clerk, and he said “he had known Waller for three years, and he was a very smart fellow.”

The four met next morning. Mrs. Waller, like her husband, was rather dressy and showy; somewhat loud in voice, and self-asserting in manner, but she was very friendly, and the four kept together sight-seeing all the morning. In the afternoon the ladies went off together shopping. Tom called on Hugh Richardson and got several letters of introduction from him, then met Waller and went with him to the Battery.

Now Tom felt a little overpowered by the ‘knowingness,’ and the jewelry, and gay dress, of Waller and his wife, and it is not wonderful that he wanted to counterbalance these advantages in some fashion. So, as he had no story of his own to tell—for evidently

it is no story, merely to be an orphan, rejected by one uncle and taken by another, and modestly trained by an old gardener,— he told the story of Agnes' family instead. Those two rich Glasgow grandfathers wore, to his mind, a halo of romance, and evidently Agnes was of a 'good old country family.'

Then it was easy to pass from this to the fact that an 'old uncle had left him a little property,' and that Ryreson people wanted him to use it among them. He didn't know as he should; only his wife's recent guardian was willing to invest with him to the tune of two thousand, if he went into a cloth factory; and then it came out about the lumber mill, and the flour mill, and the water power. Returned to the "Farmer's Home," they found the two ladies quite intimate. Mrs. Waller, who had no children, was charmed to hear about Agnes' little boy, and had insisted in buying a little hat, which she knew would suit him exactly. Mr. Waller discovered that he had a private sitting room, and there, after tea, the four spent the even-

ing. 'In compliment to the ladies,' Mr. Waller ordered sherry and water. Mrs. Waller developed an intense curiosity about Ryreson. She "knew it must be a love of a place,' and somehow, before ten o'clock, there had been given a full description of the mill, the house, the surrounding country; the price wanted by the miller, and the means possessed by Tom.

"I'll tell you my principles in trade," said Waller. "A fair price for a fair bargain—no humbug in what you offer for sale—large profits, and quick returns."

"Those are exactly my ideas," said our Tom.

"Then I think a business man, in your position say, should make his business help his neighbors, encourage their industry, open new lines of profit to them, inspire them to new productions, build them up, as it were."

"Exactly my views," said Tom.

"Well, you may possibly do that in cloth; there are some things that look well in the cloth. One question is, is that section fitted

for sheep-raising, or agriculture? Will it be a benefit to that people to ask them for wool? If not, why, perhaps one had better ask them for something else. However, I'll think it over."

"Now, Beck," said Waller, as next day they two walked arm-in-arm up Broadway, "I've thought this matter over. There at Ryreson, property is cheap: no enterprises; living is cheap. Stay in Ryreson. There is a stone mill, a lumber mill, a good stream of water, fine low-lying pasture land, arable country, agricultural people, ready to worship you if you open new means of money-making to them. Splendid country, well suited to hops and to barley, things hardly grown there; land suffering for a change in cropping. I've no doubt sheep ruin a country; nibble it down to the very dirt. I tell you, Beck, here's your fortune in three words: *Open a Brewery!* That's the very thing for you. No competition in forty miles; nice thriving towns, and hundreds of farmers to be supplied with a

fine wholesome drink. Mind, it's good, pure, medicinal beer, such as a doctor can recommend to feeble patients. You offer a fair price, and you set those farmers all raising barley and hops; work there for children in picking hops; fine wholesome work, recommended by doctors for feeble people. Almost no expense to set the establishment up. You can grind your flour and saw your lumber just the same—raise five hundred head of cattle on that meadow and the beer mash; for markets save the farmers the brutality of murdering half the calves (though how it was more brutal to butcher the calf than the full-grown beef, deponent did not say); and you'd just roll money up, fifty per cent. on your investment,—maybe eighty! You'll be a millionaire before you know it. I envy you your chance. Now this is pure disinterestedness in me; I'm giving you the benefit of my experience. I've looked round most kinds of business, but brewing I've looked into, and over, and under, and exhausted. I know all about it. Yes, sir, open a BREWERY.

"Upon my word," said Tom, "I never thought of it."

"Think of it," said Waller, earnestly.

"And you've been in brewing!"

"Yes, indeed! Down in Jersey, largest brewery in the State; my brother-in-law and myself. Hauled in money by the handful."

"Possible!" cried unsophisticated Tom; "and why did you leave it?"

"Ah, hem!" said Waller, taken a little aback. "Wife's health."

"O," said Tom; "well, perhaps you would be willing to go into the same business in a more favorable locality?"

"Willing? oh, certainly—but financially—tell you this in confidence, my dear fellow. I'm dead broke—sad story—sister's husband—what wout one do for his relations? Went security for him, mahogany trade to the Isthmus; lost his vessels, lived too high, bankrupted, all my earnings gone! Very hard on me, and on Mrs. Waller, who has been used to having money. Entirely confidential, this. Here I am, few hundreds in

pocket, no end of business experience and ability, which I look on as a fortune. Mean to go in some concern some time, as a foreman, work my way up again—never say die. You, lucky fellow, the world is all open to you, you can do as you please. Well, there's my advice ; if you want to make money in a decent, honest, safe, large-paying, inexpensive business—open a brewery."

"Upon my word I will think of it," said Tom. He thought of it, talked to Agnes of it. In the evening again, in Mr. Waller's sitting-room, talked it over continually, and Mr. Waller sent for a bottle or two of beer, so they might know what they were talking about.

"I don't believe Uncle Nebby would approve," said Agnes ; "he thinks beer injurious, and beer-drinking wrong."

"Possible !" cried Mrs. Waller. "Some old people are queer. Why, all doctors recommend it. It is so important to the old, and to nursing mothers ; I wonder how you nursed your baby without it."

“ True, Nurse Ross says all people use it in the old country.”

“ There can be no wrong about good beer,” cried Waller. “ Pure compound of hops and barley ; two of the finest things the Lord made, and fit for almost nothing else. We can’t quarrel with what Providence provides. No, no, it is a good creature of God, to be thankfully received.”

“ And yet I know the minister at Ryreson has often said he was glad we had no breweries, no distilleries near Ryreson. He would be opposed to a brewery.”

“ Good man, but narrow-minded,” suggested Waller ; “ he would cease his opposition when he saw how the thing worked.”

“ Many poor people, and hard-working mothers, save not only large doctor’s bills, but even their lives, by having a cheap, pure beer to drink. Poor, dear souls !” said Mrs. Waller, pensively.

“ And there’s the beef,” said her husband. “ Every man who sends a hundred beeves to market is a public benefactor. He cheap-

ens the price of meat, incalculable benefit that to the poor man.”

“But, I’ve read,” said Agnes, “that beer mash was not wholesome for cattle.”

Mr. Waller smiled superior. “All beer mash, ma’am, and nothing else, might be very bad; so for you to try to live on nothing but corn bread, or potatoes, would prove bad for you; but a browse on good rich pasture, and a good, stimulating lot of mash—there’s cattle for you!”

“And what a pity it is not near the city,” cried Mrs. Waller. “You could have an hundred head of cows, and a dairyman and maids, and send gallons of milk to the city. Such a treat, such a blessing to these poor, dear little babies who are underfed! It is a true work of philanthropy to increase the milk supply of a great city.”

“But I’ve heard that milk from brewer’s cows was very hurtful for children,” said Agnes.

“Not mixed with good pasture, ma’am,” said Waller. “Any one kind of diet is bad

for man or beast. As Mrs. Waller says, the milk would be a blessing, but you are not near the city. Yet who knows how soon these railroads, now spreading everywhere, will reach Ryreson, if there is something to draw them. You, Beck, with your enterprise, may be the magnet. I've been looking round Pennsylvania, and believe me there are sixty-nine railroads now in that state. Sixty-nine! Where railroads go, property rises, and men leap into fortunes in a day. You buy five or six thousand dollars' worth of property at Ryreson, open a brewery, bring hands there, set up more houses, increase the trade, have freight offering in your beer—then follows a railroad. Presto! your property is worth ten thousand; five years more it is worth thirty thousand! Perhaps you are encouraged to open a distillery; the people want you to take their corn and apples off their hands. A distillery is even more profitable than a brewery, and is its natural successor."

“But they are so bad about burning up!” cried Agnes.

“If one is careless, ma’am, not else. Nothing is dangerous unless people are careless. If I had a distillery I’d risk its burning up. I know better.”

“I’m afraid,” said Agnes, “that all our church people would be quite offended at Tom’s starting a brewery, or distillery. You know we are church members.”

“How delightful!” murmured Mrs. Waller.

“Then if they find fault, ma’am,” said Mr. Waller, briskly, “it is because they do not understand ordinary customs, and they must learn to be more liberal-minded. I’ve been up in Massachusetts, and New Hampshire, looking round, and I find plenty of church members engaged—and very properly—in this business; yes, even deacons and elders. Why, ma’am, you hardly hear a word, except from fanatics, against church members using these things, in moderation; and why should not church members make them—honestly?”

“I’m sure,” suggested Mrs. Waller, “Mrs. Beck would not be opposed to her husband making all the money he can for that blessed little boy!”

Tom interviewed the people whom he knew in the city, and they all said brewing was uncommonly profitable, if one understood the business. Hugh Richardson greatly favored the cloth factory project, but Tom was completely carried away by what Waller told him of the quick and large profits of brewing. Again and again they figured the matter over. So much for purchase, so much more for improvements, alterations and fixtures. So many hands at so much; so much for the raw material. The mills will run and return their own interest on the investment in them. Clear profits — so much! Enormous!”

“But a foreman’s salary,” suggested Tom.

“Come, now,” said Waller, confidentially, “the foreman mustn’t cost you a salary. He must be got for a certain per cent. on your gains; that you see ties him to your

interest, spurs him to make the most possible profits for you. That's human nature, Mr. Beck."

Over and over again, the same calculation, and still splendid results, and the attractions of brewing growing on Tom's mind. Said Waller:

"Nothing more needed. You have the capital, the opening, the property offered. The mills will run your affairs, until the brewery is in full swing. Hunt up a man who knows the work, who for a per cent. will bring his knowledge to help your money—you have then fair sailing."

"I wish you could be that man!" cried Tom, "I'd do it."

"Impossible," cried Waller; "my wife wouldn't leave the city."

However, they came round and round to this point, and it was found that Mrs. W. would leave the city and go to Ryreson, "for dear Mrs. Beck's sake," and Tom and Agnes had a private little funeral, and buried their last scruples; and Tom prepared to

return to Ryreson and buy out the property, being advised by Waller not to let it be known what he meant to do with it, until the purchase was safely made. Waller was going to look up workmen and machinery, and see what he could get the work contracted for ; “no cheating me, my friend. I’m up to this business, and you have your hold on me ; my wages are a per cent. on profits. You’ll see me put the thing through safe and sound. And as soon as we are in swing I will run around among those farm fellows, and contract for a crop of hops and barley for next year.”

So the heir of Hiram Beck had got his money, and this is what he meant to do with it.





## CHAPTER V.

### WHAT ARCADIA THOUGHT OF IT.

“ For now, as ever, passionless and cold,  
Doth the dread Angel of the future hold  
Evil and good before us, with no voice  
Or warning look to guide us in our choice :  
With spectral hands outstretching through the gloom  
The shadowy contrasts of the coming doom ;  
Transferred from these, it now remains to give  
The sun and shade of fate’s alternative.”

**I**F Tom Beck’s good angel had followed him all his life long, on wide, white wings, surely now his evil genius must have come in the wake of Uncle Hiram’s unblessed money ; must have followed him to New York, and there may have taken a holiday, leaving Jim Waller in its place—and having enjoyed the attractions

that New York offers to evil spirits, when Waller for the time parted company with Tom—sailed up again the evil genius, and followed Tom home to Ryreson.

Oh, Tom, Tom Beck! why was not the story ended half begun! Why did the good angels go, and the evil angels stay, and why was there anything more than the amiable idyls of youth-time? These are the misfortunate fashions of this world, and they are written for our warning. Certainly, at this present time, Tom had no idea that he was followed by bad angels; he thought the world had never gone so well with him, and that he had never walked so securely; so easy it is for us to be deceived.

Returning home, Tom and Agnes found all Ryreson flourishing; that is, the baby was thriving, and it seemed to these parents that all the place thrived with him, and just then that happened to be the case. A number of friends gathered at the parlor of the inn to greet the young couple after their wonderful journey.

“Well, Tom, have you made up your mind to anything?” asked Uncle Nebby.

“Yes: I shall buy the mill property,” said Tom.

“Glad to hear that,” said Miller Ryreson; “for I am too old to keep at work, and I want a chance to rest. I shall give you a good bargain.”

“If you’ve decided,” said Squire Judd, “you might as well have the papers drawn up immediately, say to-morrow. Do you think of adding anything to the business, Tom? What about a cloth factory?”

“I’m not exactly decided about cloth,” said Tom, evasively. “We might have to bring our wool too far, and carry our cloth too far, also. But I shall add some kind of manufacture there; and I hope, sir, that whatever I decide on, will suit your mind for that investment you mentioned.”

“Yes, I should not mind investing in a safe business, that would benefit the community, and bring a little more money amongst us,” said the Squire.

“I should hope to do something that would be the making of Ryreson,” added Tom.

“How uncommonly well you are looking, Mrs. Beck,” said Dr. Kidder, who had succeeded Agnes’ father.

“Yes,” said Tom, “Agnes has been having some good mild beer, which has strengthened her wonderfully.”

“Eh, lass, why, waur ye sick!” demanded Nurse Ross.

“No, no,” said Agnes, “I’m never sick.”

“Weel, as ye say,” said Nurse Ross, “sick or weel, a wee drap good beer does ane nae harm. I mind in the old country all the people drank their pint—it’s rare strengthenin’, but I’m oot o’ the way o’ taking it—there’s none hereabouts.”

“Yes,” said Dr. Kidder, laughing, “when I first came here, I prescribed some beer for two or three patients, but I found there was none to be had, and I changed my prescription.”

“And I’ll warrant your patients did just as well without it,” spoke up Uncle Nebby.

“I don’t say but they did,” said Dr. Kidder, who never disputed with anybody.

“I find the city doctors recommend it highly, and all the most respectable people use it,” said Tom. “Beer finds a wide market, encourages farmers to raise large crops, which otherwise they would neglect, and, in fact, furnishes employment and a living to very many laborers.”

Thus Tom took his new hobby out for a little airing before his townspeople; but he did not venture far with it at first, and presently he turned the key on it, so to speak, by remarking that while absent he had seen one of those new railroads.

There was no delay in the purchase of the mills, the meadow pasture, and the acres that lay near the mill. Miller Ryreson declined to sell the house of his fathers, and Tom found a dwelling that, with a little improvement, would do for the present.

“I want to put up a handsomer house, when I build, than I can afford now,” he said to Agnes, “so this will do for a few years,

and then I'll have a mansion that will astonish Ryreson."

No sooner had Tom purchased the mill property, than he was overwhelmed with questions about what he meant to do with it. He was very reticent in his replies. He "had an agent who was looking up matters for him, and arranging some contracts, and so on. He could tell better what he should do when the agent came to see him."

This offended some of the Arcadians. "He's mighty close-mouthed," said they; "these foolish young fellows think they know everything. He'll run into some foolery and lose all he's got, and serve him right for thinking he knows more than anybody."

The younger members of the community had more faith in Tom. "He's a sharp one," they said; "he'll wake up old Ryreson so you wouldn't know the place."

Then one evening the "Golden Fly" deposited at the inn door Mr. and Mrs. Waller. Waller had ridden on the box with Clerc, and Jean Clerc had taken his measure. He

called to Nebby North over the gate, as the "Golden Fly" rolled out of town, "Voila! Monsieur Nort! Tom has une homme from ze ville. I do not like ze cut of hees coat."

"Why, Monshu," said the matter-of-fact Nebby, "we must not quarrel with men's coats: maybe he is poor."

"Va! eet ees not what I mean. I see a man more fit for ze wicked ville, than for ze peaceful country. He ees sharp, but he may not be sound."

Next morning Tom and Waller were early going over all the mill property. Waller told Tom that he had got a splendid bargain, and that the place was even far more fit for a brewery than he had supposed. They hired additional hands for the lumber mill, and set it to work at its fullest speed, and drove out into the country to hire half a dozen workmen to begin to work at once on four cottages for hands near the mill. Waller said he had a few hundreds wherewith he should put up a house for himself near the mill, and

that machinery and a dozen men to work on the brewery would be there in less than a week.

Before night the whole story was out. Tom was going to set up a brewery. Opinions were at once divided. Nurse Ross said it was 'a main good business,—a business highly respected in the old country, and that Americans would be twice as stout, if they would use a moderate amount of beer.' Dr. Kidder said 'he saw no harm in it, and understood that most brewers made money.'

Mr. and Mrs. Waller soon converted to their opinions the host and hostess of the inn, and their son. Peters senior considered that he should get a new sign and a new name, and open a tidy bar-room, where the stage travellers could refresh themselves with "Beck's Beer."

"Nothing like alliteration," said Waller to Tom. "It shall be 'Beck's beer,' and 'Beck's brewing,' and the very name will take. Why, it will slip out so easily that it will sell the beer. If it were a distillery, now—most

a pity it is not—and I had more money in the concern, we'd say 'Waller's whiskey.' But Beck's beer! Beck's famous beer,—why it makes a man thirsty to mention it."

Young Peters, who had bought Uncle Hiram's store, was of the opinion that the brewery would be a help to the town. He meant to add a retail beer department to his store. Squire Judd was aggrieved that his advice had not been asked, and that his opinion as to a factory had been so easily set aside. Cloth would do a deal more for Ryreson than beer.

"My dear sir, you are mistaken," said Waller. "Beer will bring more industries here. Why, I've a cooper nearly promised to come here. He failed in Utica, and has a few hundreds to set himself up in some cheap place, and we could get him work here for flour and beer barrels, to say nothing of what the farmers need for fruit, cider and vinegar. He's most promised to come. He has two half-grown sons who work with him. No doubt his business

would grow to a dozen hands soon. He wants a yard and shop. There's that old shop on the back of your lot; cannot you repair it and put a fence to shut it off from yourself, and he would take it? He'd be able to buy it in a few years. You think of it, squire."

The squire grumbled that "he'd think about the shop, if the cooper was sure to take it. He didn't mind repairing it, if they'd run him out the lumber pretty soon; but he'd not put his money in the brewery, a vile smelling thing that would fill the whole air of Ryreson with such a stench as no decent folks ought to live in."

"My dear sir! It will not be unpleasant at all, when you're used to it. In cities they don't object to it, a particle—and it's healthy—positively," said Waller.

"At all events," said the squire, still irate, "it did seem an impertinence, when a young fellow like Beck set up a new business in Ryreson, without asking the advice of the oldest, and indeed of the principal inhabitants.

A business too that would change the whole appearance, habits and character of the place."

"For the better, my dear sir—for the better," said Waller; "it will bring workmen and houses here; consequently more trade and business of every sort. A new school—no doubt before long a railroad! This brewery will make Ryreson—a lovely spot, but too quiet—a part of the world."

Uncle Nebby North came to Tom in great excitement.

"What is this!" he cried. "Are you, Thomas, going to open a brewery? Is not the food and drink that the Lord sends us good enough without running them into beer? What's the work of beer, but in the long run to ruin our fellow-men? Men waste the money their families need, in buying beer; they waste their working hours idling to drink it; they hang around shops, and bar-rooms, when they should be at home with their families. They drink the beer until they get a thirst for stronger-drink; and

no one will deny, Tom, that a deal of cruelty, and crime, and woe, comes from strong drink. What's a drunkard, but a curse to the community and to himself? Scriptor says that he cannot inherit the kingdom of God."

"Pshaw, uncle! men don't get to be drunkards on beer. Mrs. Ross says everybody in the old country drinks it."

"Yes, and Mrs. Ross told me, many's the time, Thomas, that never in the old country did she see such quiet, such prosperity among all classes, such good morals in any one place, as she found here; and it has all been owing to our not having that cause of offence, strong drink, among us. Oh, Thomas! that I should live to see the day that you will open the door of ruin to this place, where you've always been treated so well. Never did men grow to be drunkards from drinking water or milk, or from eating bread. But by drinking beer, and wine, and whiskey, the earth has been made to mourn. Did I not teach you long ago the Scriptor, 'Woe to him who giveth his neighbor drink,

that putteth thy bottle to him,'” and the old man wrung his hands.

Again he came back to the charge. “Give it up, Thomas. I'll pay up the loss. I have some three thousand dollars in bank, and I'll pay off this Waller, and any others you're under engagement to, if you'll pledge yourself to stick to honest business ever after.”

“Indeed, uncle,” said Tom, “I'm very sorry you feel so, and I'm sure you'll change your mind when you come to see how this works. I cannot alter my plans, and you'll find, after a time, that they help me and damage no one.”

To Waller, whom Uncle Neddy regarded as the moving cause of Thomas' dereliction from duty, the gardener broke out with more passion. “You know what you're doing. You've been in this trade before. You've lived in the city; you know what ruin this strong drink, malt or distilled, brings to your fellows, and you are ready to make money for yourself, coining the bodies and

souls of men. Believe me, you sir, God will require this at your hand."

"I'm sure," sulked Waller, "if people do make beasts of themselves using what they ought to use in decent moderation, I wont be to blame."

"Aye, but you will be to blame. 'He who converteth a sinner from the error of his ways shall save a soul from death, and cover a multitude of sins ;' but he who causes to offend one of the least, had better be drowned in the sea. Why don't you set up your whole business at once ; why don't you set up the distillery, and why don't you have a foundry, and make bolts, and bars, and hand cuffs, and chains, and housebreaking tools for all the drunken thieves and murderers you'll turn out here? Have a rope factory for hanging the wretches, the suicides and criminals, that you'll create. What will you make of this blessed valley, but a very mouth of hell !"

"The old man's pretty lively," said Wal-

ler to Tom, as Uncle Nebby stalked away. But Tom's head hung.

"He has been more than a father to me. I'm sorry it hurts him so. I most wish I'd never gone into it."

"Nonsense," said Waller. "I'm sorry he takes on so, but it is sheer fanaticism. He'll outlive it, and he'll be proud to see the town picking up, and you a man of property, and your children well provided for."

"Well," said Tom, slowly, "I suppose it is too late to change my mind—it would suit just as little if I sold out."

"Don't be faint-hearted," said Tom's evil counsellor, "all will turn out well. Very few think as the old man does. He's been shut all his life into a narrow round."

Tom's conscience was restive. The sad face of that old man haunted him; he strolled down to Uncle Nebby's house that evening. Uncle Nebby was gathering sage and summer savory. "I'm sorry, uncle," said Tom, "that my ways displease you. I look on

this business just as on any other profitable investment."

"It's not to be looked at in that way at all, Tom," said the gardener; "it is a business made up of laying gins and nets for your neighbor's feet, and it will be far from profitable. What you rob thus from your fellows, God will take from you; you'll fall into the pit you've digged. You mean to rise on your neighbor's ruin, and other neighbors will see your ruin. Ah, I know now what Jean Clerc means by firebrand."

"Indeed, uncle, you look at the thing too seriously, and you condemn many good men who are in this business, and are using in charity much of their gains."

"Tuts!" broke in Uncle Nebby, "there'd be less call for this charity if there was less liquor. Make a man a pauper by robbing him of five hundred dollars of wages by your drinks, and then subscribe fifty dollars for a home or a hospital to keep your pauper. That's charity for you! Brewers' and distillers' charity!"

“I never knew you so hard on anybody, uncle,” said Tom, in tones of plaintive remonstrance.

“’Cause you never before knew me have such good reason,” retorted Uncle Nebby. “And, Tom, my old heart’s well nigh broke, at your going back on all your bringing up. I always knew you were main fond of money, but I never thought it would come to this; and my boy, if you have gone into this out of young haste and folly, speak the word, and I’ll gladly give up my last cent to get you out of it.”

“I don’t want to get out of it, uncle,” said Tom, “only I am sorry you take it so hard.”

“Well, I’ll take it harder and harder,” said Uncle Nebby, wiping a tear. “If ever you want me to help you, Thomas, in getting into an honest business, speak the word; but I don’t give you countenance in committing sin. Well, I’ve trained up flowers that ought-to been double, and they came single, and I’ve raised fruit trees with no end of care, and some way the fruit was

knobbly, and not what I looked for; and I've trained up you, and you are a going back on all your training. Ah, I know what the good Lord means when he says, 'I looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.'"

Slowly the old gray man rose from his stooping over the herb beds, turned one long look of remonstrance and sorrow at this youth, who had so grievously failed him, and wended his way toward his cottage door. Up this walk he had led "Mary's boy," a desolate orphan, cast upon his charities. Here he had watched over him in his youth. Here he had been proud and happy, seeing the lad grow to manhood; and now the path which had been bright, turned suddenly off toward darkness; it left the clear daylight of honest deeds, and noble purposes, and self-sacrifices, and wandered off into greed, and selfishness, and God-forgetting. The old man wondered why it was. Had he forgotten the selfish strain of the Beck blood in the boy, and regarded too lightly

the indications of early avarice? Had he been too ready to give the boy an exalted idea of himself, and his own smartness, and to think him perfect because he was *his* boy, and had he deemed too lightly of the grace of God, and taken good-nature, and love of approbation, and self-loving, for godliness and Christian charity? He could not tell. He had looked that it should bring forth grapes—and it had brought forth—wild grapes!

Tom went home moodily—his head bent, his hands behind him, he did not feel like going in to see Agnes and the child. Would that child live to set the tooth of ingratitude in his heart, as he had in Uncle Nebby's? In what was the babe more beholden to him, than he to Uncle Nebby? He strolled through the village and on to the mill. Changes, improvements he called them, were there everywhere in progress. The clatter of work had ceased, the men had gone home; the moonlight lay broadly over the lush meadow land, the silver flood of the

creek, "winding down through the night," the gray and silent mills rising on either side. The shadows of the trees lay in the water, and crickets and owls were calling through the dewy air. He stood on the bridge above the dam, listening to the rush of waters. Why did people oppose him in his struggle toward fortune? Why was he worse than others? Why cannot every man judge for himself? It was good to get money, and he would do good with it. Ah, this proposition about money is a triad—and he had left out the second strain, "it must be gotten in a good way."

A quick step near him. "Doldrums, Tom!" cried out the lively Waller. "Got the blues—going to drown yourself?"

"Folks seem to be trying to drive me to it," growled Tom. It is so easy to growl when the conscience is ill at ease. "Uncle Nebby goes on so."

"Excellent old man, but prejudiced; result of a rural life—set in his ways—good ways, but old-fashioned. Keep a stiff upper lip,

Tom, for you've got to catch it again. The parson's been after me, and he'll be after you. Seems he's got a crotchet, also; most people in Ryreson have them: cause—seclusion. Some parsons are reasonable on this matter, but this one is not. Admirable man in most respects. Must be treated by us with deference; as to his little notions we must hear them with meekness."

"Oh dear!" groaned Tom, to whom the minister had always been the embodiment of what ought to be believed, and put in practice.

"'Pon my word, I believe he is coming here now," said Waller, watching a tall black shadow moving along the footpath through the pasture. Sure enough it was the minister coming toward the bridge, and there he met them.

"I have just come from Mr. Walworth's," he said; "he is dying."

"I am sorry to hear it," said Tom.

"Very old gentleman, isn't he?" said Waller.

“Very; and as I stood by him to-night, I considered that this was the peaceful ending of a life well spent. Sinners are we all, but here at least was a man who had never willingly harmed his neighbor. He might look back and say, that so far as he knows, no man has ever been the worse for him; he has undertaken nothing on which he could not ask the blessing of God. Thomas, can you ask God’s blessing on this plan of yours, for opening a brewery?”

“Why—I—suppose so. I mean no harm in it,” said Tom, warily.

“Every Christian,” said the minister, “is bound to serve and glorify God in his daily calling. He is not at liberty to engage in any work upon which he cannot ask God’s blessing, as a work which pursues his own good, does not hinder the good of his neighbor, and throws no shadow on the cause of Him who pleased not himself but lived to glorify the Father’s name.”

“Why, sir,” said Waller, “don’t you think

any men who make or sell malt or alcoholic drinks, may be Christians?"

"There may be those who suppose themselves to be Christians, who have fallen into this kind of business from pressure of friends, from inheritance, from sheer thoughtlessness as to consequences. This is a question upon which the world is just waking up. But these persons, if they are truly Christians, as soon as they see that they are injuring their fellows or harming the cause of Christ, will abandon their very questionable business. A Christian may go wrong, but he will not persist in going wrong, when his eyes are opened."

"I cannot see such great wrong in this brewing," said Tom; "I am only trying to make a competence for my family; 'he who careth not for his own, is worse than an infidel.'"

"We are only permitted lawful efforts to 'further our own or our neighbor's wealth or outward estate.' That is not lawful which results in the damage of the common wealth,

in the hindering of our neighbor's prosperity in mind, body or estate," replied the minister.

"But if people would not make beasts of themselves," cried Waller, "if they would observe moderation."

"Evidently most men are incompetent to moderation," said the minister; "it must be—abstinence or excess—and, 'Ye that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak.'"

"If this total abstinence were good and needful, were more—if you'll excuse me—than an outbreak of fanaticism—would not the Christian world have roused up to it before?" said Waller. "I've been about a great deal, and I find ten ministers that use a little liquor for one that is a tetotaler; and I find quite as many deacons, and wardens, and elders, who are engaged in beer and liquor business as other men."

"But the world is waking up to the danger and enormity of this thing," said the minister. "What a terrible arraignment is that of Mr. Cheever's, in 'Deacon Giles' Distillery!'"

“Yes,” cried Waller, in some triumph, “and he got into jail for it, too!”

“So did Bunyan get in jail for preaching, but the world has justified him; and the whole moral sense of the community, the whole Christian sense of the church justifies Mr. Cheever in his denunciation of a great wrong. He is one of the pioneers of a grand cause, which shall sweep not only over this country, but over the world. The ‘jail’ you mention, in his case, is a mere legal technicality, no disgrace. A man finds himself injured by having the truth told. That is a heavy charge Mr. Cheever brings against brewers in ‘Deacon Jones’ Brewery,’ that they are doing the devil’s work, and it is a true charge, sustained by facts; and the religious community will, within a few years, come to see that trade in malted or spirituous liquors is incompatible with a Christian profession. Thomas! you cannot serve God and mammon; if for gain, you persist in entering this business, you will destroy your own soul, and I much fear me, the souls of your family.”

“Don’t you think,” said Waller, “that you are asking too much of a young man like Beck, to move in the advance guard of public opinion that way?”

“I don’t see,” remonstrated Tom, “how I can be expected to change this thing, just as I’ve begun it.”

Firmness, you know, cleaves to what it believes to be right; obstinacy cleaves to what it has done. Tom was obstinate.

“The whole town would think better of you, if you gave it up,” said the pastor; “we are most of us opposed to the plan, and all think that after Mr. North’s kindness to you, you ought not cross his wishes as you are now doing. The old man is deeply wounded.”

“He’ll come round,” said Waller; “Squire Judd will too, and take a share in the work, see if he don’t; and the town will come over to our side when they see what we are doing for them.”

“It seems, Mr. Waller,” said the pastor, much annoyed, “that you fear to have Tom answer for himself. Of course you are pecuni-

arily interested in this matter, as it promises you business in brewing, which is, I believe, your work. Thomas, money shall not be wanting to free you from any entanglements and to carry out the plan of a cloth factory, or any other work you prefer, if you will consent to leave this brewing business. By all the anxiety I, as your pastor, feel for your soul, I beg you now to withdraw from this evil way."

Waller, angry with what had been said to him, tramped off toward the inn. Tom did not reply.

"Thomas," said the pastor, pointing beyond the meadow land, "that light burns by Mr. Walworth's dying bed. This night his soul gives account to God of deeds done in the body. Such an hour must come to you; beware what reckoning you heap up for that time."

Tom paced up and down the little bridge.

"Dear sir, I am very sorry you all feel so. I think you are all very hard on me. I do not intend to do any harm; why cannot

I judge for myself, like other men? If I had known beforehand how this would be, I should perhaps have chosen the less profitable plan of a cloth factory. At present I cannot draw back from my undertaking, but I hope to live opposition down."

"Thomas," said the pastor, "you cannot live down God's opposition to a course of moral wrong!"

Then he turned, and followed the path taken by Waller, the echo of whose strides had died away in the distance.

Tom was left alone upon the bridge, looking down into the stream. As that stream flowed on, so should the years flow by, and bring him to the gates of death, and—what then?

The flowing of the water beneath him seemed to bring to Tom solemn thoughts.

As nixies and water sprites are said to rise out of the waves before "Sunday children," so forms and faces and visions, seemed to rise out of the water to Tom. There was Uncle Nebby's face, the face of an old man's sorrow. For a background it had all those years of

kindness, of self-sacrifice, of homely pride ; now old and grey, a shadow must lie over his life, cast by the lad whom he had reared at his hearthstone. Rose up Uncle Hiram's face, hard, and cunning, and mocking, and Tom thought he saw therein a subtle likeness to his own ! There are hours when powers of evil seem to strive in us and about us ; hours of crisis, when we choose—for eternity. Now in Tom strove gratitude, and conscience, trained carefully for years ; strove the love of the approbation of his fellows ; strove moral fear, aroused by his pastor's warnings : and with these contended the influence of the crafty Waller, the obstinacy and greed and selfishness of his own disposition. The evil began to gain the mastery. A glamour was spread over his eyes : he seemed to see tall buildings in brick and stone rise on either side the flowing stream,—great store houses — a railroad depot ; he saw the double line of track wind along the valley. On yonder hill rose a splendid mansion, such as he had seen near New York ; waited at the gate a carriage

and pair ; he saw himself coming through the grounds—creator of all this wealth and busy stir ; he saw a bank, and himself its president ; he saw visits to the city, where he lived at the grand hotels, which he had as yet viewed only from the outside, and himself now a most honored guest, while all obsequiously served the millionaire ! He struck his clenched fist on the railing of the bridge. “ All this may be mine ! I will not give it up ! ” Oh, why was this ?

“ The outward, wayward life we see,  
The hidden springs we may not know ;  
Nor is it given us to discern  
What threads the fatal sisters spun ;  
Through what ancestral years has run  
The sorrow with the creature born.”

Tom's mother had been a pleasant but a self-willed girl, fond of dress and pleasure, craving a gay life which she could not attain ; his father had been easily led, weak, and like all weak folks, capable of fits of obstinacy ; his grandfather had been a man who loved money more than all beside. Uncle Hiram had been made on that same pattern, obstinate

and avaricious; and there were times when people said Tom looked like Uncle Hiram. And these traits had come out prominently in Tom; a craving for gain, a capacity for being strongly influenced, and a tremendous obstinacy in clinging to his own course. It seemed sanctified to him, because it was his own course. Bright and quick-witted, ready to think and speak, fond of pleasing people and of being praised, an amiable disposition which had always found amiability profitable, these had secured Tom plenty of friends. There had been mingled in him causes of

“A life long discord and annoy,  
Water of tears and oil of joy;  
And hid within the folded bud,  
Perversities of flower and fruit.’

These inborn perversities demand our pity; yet none the less was he responsible. Standing in the ‘soul’s debatable land,’ he had grounds of judgment, and capacity for judgment, and he madly took the course ‘I will,’ and not ‘I ought.’

Yes, he had re-decided to stand by his

plan of the brewery. Should he make himself ridiculous by changing? Why should his way of winning a fortune be so interfered with? Would it be honorable to go back on his word to Waller and the rest? Couldn't he use the money well if it was earned by a brewery? He'd show people he could and would be charitable with it, and the church would be glad to get it. Charity out of brewers' and distillers' money! "It is not lawful for to put the money into the treasury because it is the price of blood." There is but one use for such accursed money—we can buy the potter's field to bury therein the beggared, the outcast and the ruined.

"I will show them that I am right," said Tom, and he straightened himself, and turned from the bridge, and passed down the embankment to the footpath leading into the village. It was not a long slope, only a few paces, and yet, as we mean to have no concealments, and have no recondite plot, we may say that from the instant Tom's foot

touched the decline, his course was only downward, and that continually.

He did not know it himself at first ; in fact he felt sure that he was moving upward. His friends did not see that he was moving downward ; that pathway bends so imperceptibly, it is like the curving of the earth's surface, unrealized by those who move along it. But the good angels know, from the celestial spaces where they watch us stumbling, climbing, or gliding downward, poor dwellers here below !

The evil angels know, looking upward from those dismal abysses where the down grade ends, and where they watch for the coming of heedless or reckless souls !





## CHAPTER VI.

### TOM PROCEEDS TO JUSTIFY HIMSELF.

“ Turn, turn my wheel ! All things must change,  
To something new, to something strange ;  
Nothing that is can pause or stay :  
The moon will wax, the moon will wane,  
The mist and cloud will turn to rain,  
The rain to mist and cloud again,  
To-morrow be—to-day !”



OM and Waller met on the inn porch before breakfast. Waller looked anxiously at his victim.

“ My mind's made up,” said Tom. “ This thing has to be gone through with ; we must show these folks that they are mistaken ; that they are wrong and we are right.”

Tom spoke with some heat ; he seemed to

take it as a deadly insult that anybody had thought him wrong. Waller grasped his hand.

“You’re true grit, my boy. Now you’re on your metal. Yes, now we will show them that our outlook is a little wider than theirs; you will justify yourself, Tom, you will justify yourself.”

“We’ll not spare money nor work,” said Tom, “to make things look up. I’ll tell you, Waller, you go to Utica and get us a carpenter and some more men, and trot that cooper along this way. If we can get a carpenter to settle, so much the better. I fancy that Mr. Walworth’s cottage beyond the meadow will be for rent now; the old lady will go to her son.”

Tom faltered a little. Those were solemn words that the minister had spoken in regard to Walworth.

Again Waller wrung Tom’s hand. “You’re the man for me,” he cried; “you’ve got the longest business head ever I saw on a man’s shoulders.” He fell back and gazed on Tom

admiringly, as one gazes on a piece of statuary. The breakfast bell jingled. "I'll tell you, Tom, I'll go off on that little business this very morning, in the "Golden Fly," when it comes by here at eight. Maria! I'm off on business—pack my bag for the coach, will you?"

"Off again!" cried Maria, otherwise Mrs. Waller; "well, what a pair of workers you and Mr. Beck are!"

As a result of Waller's expedition, a carpenter and five men came to Ryreson. Tom hired the Walworth cottage for the carpenter, and the five hands boarded at the inn. Mr. Peters was in high good humor; said he had never seen such thriving times, and engaged the carpenter to fix him up a bar-room within the year; "a tight, handsome place, you know," he said, "and you may repair the dining-room, and make me another long table."

Young Peters also engaged the carpenter. "By the time the brewery is running I want a handsome new front porch to my

shop, and a side-room, with long windows."

The carpenter went to work on Squire Judd's old shop building, and as the cooper had pledged himself to hire it, the squire indulged in extensive repairs, and the shop soon showed two good work-rooms below, two living rooms above, and a yard with a neat paling fence. Waller flew about the country in a light wagon and engaged various farmers to put in crops of barley, and to plant fields of hops; he explained the advantage to the land of having entirely new crops in; he expounded the market price—'and it might be higher'—and he showed how women and children could make wages in 'hopping time.' Waller joked and flattered everybody, had a word on every subject. The good farmers thought him 'a splendid fellow.' While engaged in this way Waller did not fail to seek business for his cooper—orders for barrels, tubs and pails. 'Splendid work—last a life time—cheap and good.' He also looked out for

the future of his carpenter. 'We'll keep him busy as he can spin for a year, but after that, Mr. Brown, you'll want a new front piazza to your house. A long piazza well trimmed with vines will give your house a handsome frontage; and we mean to have a railroad along here, before we're much older.' 'Mr. Wing, your house needs an addition on the right side—L and porch; then you'd really look a splendid mansion from the road. See that he engages our new carpenter for it, Mrs. Wing! There's a first class workman for you, and dirt cheap.' 'Mr. Hand, your long front yard is just the spot for grapes. Get Mr. North to set you a double row of vines this fall, and next year have Bink, our new carpenter, make you an arbor and a summer house. In two years' time your place would be worth a thousand dollars more from that little investment! We mean to bring the price of property right straight up in this thriving neighborhood.'

Around the country went Tom in the spring

wagon. 'He wanted to raise cattle, fifty head; he'd give fair prices for good stout weaned calves, and a few two-year olds, next year; and would Mr. Wing put in a dozen acres of broom corn? The cooper's old father was with him, excellent broom-maker, large, small, and brush brooms; he meant to open a business. Ryreson would be a manufacturing town some day before they knew it.' He copied Waller's style of talk, he thought it so taking.

Tom had the house in which he was to live set in order as speedily as possible; he put green blinds on the windows, a picket fence round about the yard, a latticed porch; by Waller's advice he added a little arbor, and some rustic seats. Said the astute Waller, "You'll thrive, if you seem to thrive. Besides, you will live here until you are ready to build a fine house, and you shouldn't do that until you are really able; then, the better this is, the better it will sell when you move out of it."

What a pity that Waller's energies and

abilities had not been directed to some legitimate business!

Waller's own snug house went up quickly, a six-room cottage, but with an attractive look about it. The fellow really had a taste in building. He set up an arch for vines over the gate, and a pillar with a bird house upon it for more vines; and his front room jutted out into a little conservatory. "We must make trade for Mr. North," he said to Tom; "we can't afford to quarrel with anybody, and we owe the old gentleman something for vexing him. If we set the fashion in flowers, vines, graperies, and such gimcracks, other folks will follow, and the old man will be pleased before he knows it."

Waller bought his shrubbery, his roots and seeds, and paid for them, protesting they were absurdly cheap. Uncle Nebby furnished Tom's yard for love's sake. He said to Agnes, "Ah, my dear, if only Tom was doing right, and walking in a way where God could bless him, how glad I'd be! Now I foresee sorrow and a great blight ahead of

you. It may be far off, but it is sure. 'The wicked shall be taken in his own net.' "

Tom and Waller followed out with great care their plan of giving no offence, and of making their neighbors sharers in whatever business was going.

The cooper throve so that in the second year of his stay he needed his whole shop for work, and he bought a lot from Squire Judd, and had the carpenter put him up a house. Of course Squire Judd did not object to what was bringing money into his purse.

But now look on for two years from the time that Tom brought Jim Waller to Ryreson. The old flour-mill does increased work; the saw-mill has been doubled in size and capacity. Near it is a large carpenter's shop, where the old village carpenter and the new man Bink are in partnership. Beside the creek, opposite the mill, rises the huge brewery, with "Beck's Beer," in a mighty arch of letters above it. On Ryreson's meadows, that famous pasture land, feed fifty cattle, fattening for market, and along the north edge

of the meadows are sheds and troughs where the brutes get shelter and "beer mash." Six houses for workmen, each with a little yard, stretch along between the mills and the village. Behind Squire Judd's is the "cooper's shop and broom factory," and near by the cooper's house. Tom's house and Waller's house stand side by side at the entrance of the village; and decorated with flowers, vines and shrubs, they are really very pretty. Uncle Hiram's store is transformed. It has a side room and a piazza, and does twice the business that it formerly did. The tavern—not an inn now — is also transformed. A bar-room is built, and the piazza is extended so that guests may sit in the air and sip beer. The house is painted, and there is a new sign swinging aloft. Once the sign was a sheaf of wheat, silver on a green ground. Now it is a mug of beer, red, with three inches of white foam, on a blue ground, and the name of the tavern is the "Pint and Pot" — "Peeters' Pint and Pot." That name is a production of Mr. Waller's highly alliterative mind; and

above the peak of the roof, and painted in the centre of each door you have three great P's. 'It attracts attention,' Peters says, complacently; and now the "Golden Fly" stops here for supper.

Dr. Kidder has built a little office beside the store. He speaks well of everything—that is his habit—and he says 'his practice is improving wonderfully,' and that is very true. He lays it to there being more people now in Ryreson. Hugh Richardson has at last concluded to come to Ryreson to live, although he says the place does not please him so well in its new wakefulness and stir, as it did in its old-time sleepy beauty—possibly though his family may find it more convenient. There is now a butcher shop and green grocers in the town, near the tavern. Waller, the indefatigable, brought a red-faced and big nosed man there to open that institution. He gets the beef from Tom's herd, and the vegetables from Uncle Nebby—the vegetables are excellent.

The minister suspects the truth, that the

big-nosed man, who sets a valuable example in the daily use of "Beck's beer," is merely a figure head, and that the capital and profits are Jim Waller's. Bundy, the big-nosed man, is a sort of scandal in this late Arcadia. He gets stupid in the afternoon, and quarrels with his wife in the morning; and the loud sound of the two coarse voices breaks harshly on the dewy air.

Hugh Richardson is building a house in a handsome lot next the church, and there is talk of building an academy. None so eager in this project as Tom and Waller. Waller desired to make himself popular, to get influence. Tom was anxious to prove to the people that his brewery was every way for the best interest of the village; besides this, Tom had promised himself that he would show that a brewer was an honest, intelligent, and philanthropic man; and that there was nothing in his business that antagonized his Christianity—at least the profession thereof. Indeed, during these two years, Tom's conscience, once stirred by the re-

monstrances of Uncle Nebby and the minister, had become in a great measure appeased; he said that he had seen no ill effects of his trade. Bundy, it was true, drank more beer than any man in town, and Bundy was the worst man in town; but Waller noted that Bundy had his habit of drinking long before he came to Ryreson; and Waller also said that if Bundy took to making a beast of himself, he'd pack him where he came from." Uncle Nebby heard him.

"That's main hard on the beasts, Mr. Waller; if Bundy would only take to making a beast of himself, he'd be a deal better than he is now; it's hard on the beasts, likening him to them; the beasts don't sit round boozy afternoons, and roar at their families in the morning."

"Dinna be sae hard on a bit of good beer, Maister North," said Nurse Ross. "I take my pint at dinner, and it's doin' me a hantle o' good. I've gained ten poun' this year, and flesh is becomin' to an auld woman; an' there's Agnes, she couldna' ha'

nursed our second boy, wi'out the pint of beer mornings, I'm weel convinced."

"It's too soon to tell the harm the beer will do," said Nebby North: "the brewery has only been well running this nine months, and folks don't change habits in that scrap of time. It will take later days to show the damage to the village, and to Tom himself this evil trade will bring. I doubt not we shall see the day when the Scriptor will come true here, 'He turneth rivers into a wilderness, and water springs into dry ground; a fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.'"

"How can ye be sae hard on Tom, a man who goes to his church regular, and keeps at home Sabbath, savin' a wee walk along the meadow, or beyont the dam wi' Mr. Waller?"

"I wish he'd never seen Waller," groaned Uncle Nebby; "he is of those who 'spread a net by the wayside,' and Tom is confederate with him in an evil matter. It is written in the Scriptor, 'He made a pit and digged it,

and is fallen into the ditch which he made. His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down on his own pate.' ”

“It's very unchristian in you to be sae hard on a mon,” said Nurse Ross; “Mr. Waller is that industrious that he works early an' late; he goes to kirk on Sunday mornings, an' always pits his contribution in the plate; an' I never see a man fonder o' a bairn than he is o' his little boy, as will be a year old to-morrow.”

“He has his good points,” said Uncle Nebby, “but I would he were some where else with *all* his points.”

A meeting in behalf of an academy was finally called. Miller Ryreson had said he would give the lot, because the town bore his name. Uncle Nebby offered to give two hundred dollars for a fence, and to set out trees and shrubs. He said he was “a lone old bachelor, and he would like according to his power to help on a good work in his

native place. He wished all works in that place were as good as the school."

This side fling at his settled aversion, the brewery, roused Tom and Waller to respond indirectly by speeches, telling how dearly they had the good of Ryreson at heart, how they felt identified with the place, and desired to give it a share in all their prosperity; as they were prospering beyond their expectation, they would subscribe to the cause of education beyond their first expectation—and accordingly each named a sum handsome in proportion to his means. This spurred up Squire Judd, Dr. Kidder, Peters, father and son, Hugh Richardson and others, and the academy was soon a fixed fact.

Perhaps it was Tom's public spirit, perhaps it was the hint and the tangible evidence of prosperity that inspired Squire Judd, but before winter he had invested three thousand dollars in the brewery, and farmer Wing put two thousand therein also. Waller saw that public spirit paid, and a year after he agi-

tated an improvement on his own account.

Waller's project was to turn the straggling village graveyard into a pretty cemetery. He had several reasons impelling him to this proposal; he had some taste, and the ill-fenced, uneven parcel of ground where the Ryreson dead lay, was offensive to his eyes, occupying a rise of land near the church. To propose improvement here looked disinterested; none of his relatives lay in that solemn camping ground. It was a plan, too, to interest all the people, even those who were most opposed to the brewery. Mr. Waller was fluent, and he called a meeting and made his little speeches, and produced a very good impression, 'as a fellow of public spirit and good feeling.' Hugh Richardson and Waller left the church, where the meeting had been held, together.

"It is a good plan," said Richardson, "and I shall do my share towards it; but the truth is I don't like Ryreson nearly as well as I did years ago. The kind of people that Beck's

works have brought here are not quiet, gentle and innocent, as the people were twenty years since. The men, without being particularly bad, are noisy, and lounge about the streets Sundays and evenings; the women are slatternly and hang over the fences with their hair tumbling down their shoulders. I don't like the brewing business; I think it damaging in the long run to the community and the individual: the workmen at such a business, if you'll notice, are never studious and religious, as you may often find in other trades."

"I don't see how a business can be damaging to a community when it brings work and money into it."

"It is a business of destruction," said Richardson. "The flour mill takes the wheat and turns every part of it to what is useful and good for the whole community; nothing is wasted; but the brewer, out of his forty-seven pounds to the bushel of barley, produces only a certain quantity of drink upon which a man could not possibly live. The pro-

duce of the earth should support the people who live upon it. The grain is fitted to afford this support ; but while every bushel of grain made into bread feeds animal life, every bushel made into beer has its nutritive power destroyed, and not only this, but some believe, and I am of them, that while the nutritive power is destroyed, the grain in beer is turned to what is positively injurious ; — so that instead of performing its legitimate office of supporting human life, it destroys life. All labor should add something to the sum of human comfort and wealth ; either in absolute increase, or in providing for taking care of and producing that increase.”

“ But the brewing business does produce wealth and add to comfort. Look at Ryerson. Beck is making money ; he is a certain number of dollars richer this year than last. My family are supported on my salary ; here are ten workmen supported on the wages they earn in the brewery. We leave out the farmers who sell grain and hops, the cooper, the carpenters, as you will say they would

all have earned equal wages at some other kind of factory; but here are twelve families of citizens supported for the State."

"And where does Beck get this money?"

"It is paid to him by the wholesale and retail dealers."

"And by whom is it paid to them?"

"By the consumers."

"Let us say, as your business is only begun here, that for what you turn out of this brewery the consumers pay yearly \$10,000. Now, sir, at the end of the year, what has the State to show for that ten thousand dollars? Not one whit more brain, or muscle, or prospects of longevity in its citizens, for beer does not produce these. Not added industry and morality in the consumer, for beer does not produce these. Have these ten thousand dollars built a house, or made a book, or opened a grocery business, or created a better man? You can, at the end of the year, find absolutely nothing for the ten thousand. You may find something on the minus side; you may find a man who

was industrious become idle, who was moral become drunken, who was healthy become apoplectic. Brewing is a business of destruction."

"I cannot accept that statement," said Waller, "when I have before my eyes Ryreson, with more houses, more stores, more business, since this brewery was set up."

"This apparent prosperity," said Richardson, "is the flush of fever, the bloating of dropsy; it is not the tinge of health or the improvement in flesh. In ten or twenty years Ryreson will be poorer, will have debt, disease, dirt — poverty, paupers; whereas twenty years ago all these were unknown. The town is started on the down grade."

Three years more: Tom is still in his own opinion justifying himself. There are sixteen houses for workmen: there is a brick yard: the brewery has a brick wing: the academy is built, two stories high, with an extension for the teacher's house: the village cemetery has a stone wall, gravel walks, shrubs and trees, a fine arch at the gate, some neat

headstones ; the graves are all well kept and bordered with box and flowers. In Tom Beck's house are now four children, the youngest a small sickly infant, fondly tended by Nurse Ross. Nurse Ross herself has grown red-faced and enormously stout. She says it is the beer that agrees with her, and has produced this change. Uncle Nebby thinks the change an unhealthful one, and tells Nurse Ross that she is "not half the woman she was, except in size."

Nurse Ross cannot understand why the baby, the only girl, should be so miserably feeble. She says, "Agnes has had so plenty of good beer, this five years, she canna see how she came to have such a puny child. But Ryreson is not so healthy as it was : Dr. Murtry had few patients, and Dr. Kidder has plenty ; and the grave yard gets full faster."

"Aye," says Uncle Nebby, "it's the beer ; there are more people here, and of a less healthy kind. The folk that collect about breweries may be red and heavy set, but

they are always ailing, and have ailing families; but the village people are not as stout and sound as they were in the times when beer was unknown in Ryreson."

"Ye're aye flinging at the beer," says Nurse Ross. "I dinna gie our childer beer, but Mistress Waller lets her boy aye drink what he will o't, an' there's nae healthier nor handsomer child in town."

But Ryreson has a new experience. Bundy at the butcher and grocery shop has drunk more and more beer, and his wife has followed his example; it has become impossible to keep him in the shop. Waller, who now openly acknowledges the business, thinks he must find a successor.

The successor was provided in a terrible fashion. One of the workmen in the brewery disappeared on a Saturday evening. There was much inquiry for him on Sunday and on Monday morning. The search ceased on Monday afternoon, and there arose a hum of horror and wonder through all the walks of the late Arcadia. The men who

were removing the mash found their comrade's body. He had fallen into a great tub of mash and been smothered.

Waller tried to make his verdict heard above the hum; 'the man had showed symptoms of heart disease; he had been smitten with his disease as he passed on a board above the tub. He was dead when he fell in.'

"Heaven forgive him," said Uncle Nebby; "that man was the hardest drinker at the brewery, and I doubt not he was tipsy and lost his footing, as he was closing up the place for the night. He most likely died drunk. Oh, that my Tom should have had a hand in this fearful thing!"

"Tom," said Waller, "we must do something to soften this impression. We will buy a lot at the cemetery for our hands, and iron fence it, with marble corner posts, and set up a stone for this poor chap, and his widow shall have Bundy's place at the meat shop."

This was the first death by violence or

accident that had ever occurred at Ryreson ; everybody came out to the funeral. The custom was there for funeral sermons. The concourse was too great for the house or church, and the minister stood beside the grave, and preached from "This night thy soul shall be required of thee !" A terrible stillness fell on the listening assembly as our responsibility to God for our own souls, and the souls of our neighbors, was set forth. In silence the throng dispersed.

"The parson had a fine chance at us, and he used it," said Waller to Tom ; "that is always the way ; if a man is succeeding in life, all his neighbors hoot after him out of envy—and call it conscience."

"I wish this had not happened," said Tom, sighing.

"So does everybody ; but suppose we had had a cloth factory, and he'd got dizzy and rolled into a dye vat ? Accidents will happen, and he'd have been dead all the same. If he was not ready to meet God, why we are not to blame ; we didn't bring

him up ; and I think when a poor illiterate chap like that dies, the Lord wont be very hard on him. Most likely he did the best he knew, and he'll have a better chance in the world to come."

Thus it ever is, those who dare not face the results of their own deliberate deeds, solace themselves with a lie about the world to come.

The widow was given the shop, and drunken Bundy and his wife retired to a miserable wreck of a place that had been used as a sort of tool house for the tavern, Tom, for shame's sake, put a few shingles on the roof, a sash in the window, and had the door mended up. Mr. Peters said Bundy could work around his stable and barnyard for cold victuals from the tavern table Uncle Nebby gave the miserable couple some potatoes and some good advice ; the first offering being accepted, the other ignored. Hugh Richardson sent them some wood, and the minister and his wife came to urge the pair to reformation, and gave them

some bedding. These were the first paupers of Ryreson. Bundy went in and out the brewery and got all the beer that he wanted, so did his wife; the couple had their provisions from the tavern, and were often drunk all day and all night. The winter was a bitter one. The hut was ruinous. In February Bundy died. Where should he be buried? There was no potter's field for paupers—hitherto at Ryreson every dead person had had friends and means sufficient to a decent burial. Hugh Richardson collected a few dollars and ordered Bink to make a pine coffin, painted black, for poor Bundy. The graveyard was church property. The trustees met, and concluded to purchase half an acre in the rear of the cemetery and fence it in for a potter's field.

“We shall have paupers to fill it, never fear,” said Hugh Richardson, who was chairman.

On a miserable, sleety afternoon, Ryreson saw its first pauper's burial. The new half acre was rough, covered with briars

whipping leafless in the wind, and was bristling with dead stalks of nettle and milkweed. In one corner a grave had been dug. The coffin was brought in Mr. Peters' cart, with a black cloth flung over it; and Mrs. Bundy, who had been provided with a black gown, was riding beside the driver; behind followed the minister, carrying his umbrella, and half-a-dozen men came after to lift the coffin, and fill up the grave. When the cart stopped, it was found that Mrs. Bundy was so tipsy that she could hardly stand. A few men from the neighborhood gathered about. The pastor briefly pointed out to the bystanders, that this was the first drunkard's death, the first pauper's burial in Ryreson; hitherto death had had a dignity, and burials a sanctity; but this bore, in all its haste, its forlorn degradation, the marks of the curse that was creeping over the valley.

Left to herself, Mollie Bundy gathered what she wanted to eat from Mr. Peters' table, and by dint of hanging about the brewery got what she wanted to drink;

bloated, ragged, a disgrace to the place, a sight such as had never crossed the eyes of the villagers in the blest Arcadian times, the miserable woman haunted the streets until midsummer, when she was laid beside her husband in the potter's field. At this time a small tax was levied on the villagers, to fence, and clean up this burial place of the poor; this was the first tax of the kind ever levied at Ryreson.

The minister and Hugh Richardson pointed out to Tom that access to the brewery had been very bad for the Bundys, and that many of the village boys, after school hours, hung about his premises, exploring and tasting.

"A flouring mill and a saw mill are safe enough for them," said the minister, "but your brewery may prove to them the gate of ruin. You have opened a place here, dangerous to our youth."

"They are not wanted in there, and shall be kept out," said Tom; and a great sign went up, "No admittance except on business."

And now there was another experience at Ryreson. The place had been exceptionally healthy. Children born there had not seemed to know how to do otherwise than grow up wholesomely. This year disease broke out among the little ones. Some new Herod's decree seemed to have gone out against the children "from two years old and under." Dr. Kidder was flying about through the sixteen workmen's houses, at Binks, at the cooper's, and now at Tom Beck's and Mr. Wallers.

Mrs. Waller's hearty, six months' old girl drooped as if touched by a plague. Agnes' feeble little only daughter pined away to a skeleton. Dr. Kidder visited and prescribed, and prescribed and visited—sympathized sincerely; saw one little patient after another drop into dreamless slumbers; and again, and again, and again, the funeral train creep up to the pretty cemetery, and return, leaving there a little mound of new earth. One week a long white and black streamer floated from Waller's front door; the next

week the same token of infant death was on Tom Beck's house. Tom and Waller sat in the darkened dining-room.

"I'll tell you," said Dr. Kidder, confidentially, "what, in my opinion, is the cause of all this. None of the farmers' children are troubled, the Peters' children recovered easily, the Richardsons are quite well. The deaths have all been in the families that buy milk from your stockman's dairy; you use yourselves milk from a cow out of your pasture. Those cows all get your mash; and though they get also good grass on your pasture, there are too many cattle feeding there, and they depend largely on the mash, and that has poisoned the milk that these children lived on. You may depend on it that is the secret."

A poor time to tell the secret when all those children had been sacrificed! And if it should get out, all the village would be infuriated against the luckless brewers, though they had suffered as well as the others.

“You may be mistaken, doctor,” said Waller; “and if this is talked of, it will stir up scandal and hostility. True or not, we are blameless, and have suffered with the rest.”

“Depend on me,” said Dr. Kidder. “I shall not mention this to any one else. I shall merely see to a change of food for the rest of the children, who have used this milk; and I advise you to get for your own families, a cow which never touches mash. Keep her separate from the rest of your cattle.”

“Well, if you advise it,” said Tom, secretly agreeing, and determined never to let child of his touch another drop of milk made of brewery stuff; “but I think likely the cause is in the air or water, and in the contagion of the disease.”

“It is not contagious, though it may be epidemic,” interposed the doctor; “but you had better do as I say about your own cow. I’ll advise these work people not to raise their children on milk. They can’t afford to keep cows.”

“No, and we sell them the milk very cheap, and it is excellent milk, — no water in it,” said Waller.

No wonder there were diseases and peaked faces to be found along the streets of Ryreson; the milk and the meat, the beef cattle and the hogs, were poisoned with the rotten mash.

There was now a horrible secret between the Becks and the Wallers. They shuddered at the sight of the grave yard; they were responsible for all those short low graves; and in each of their own homes was a little empty crib, a drawer full of unused little garments, and a vision of a little wan, dead face—and the cause? They must make money in unlawful ways. But the minister, and Hugh, and Uncle Nebby, all guessed the fatal truth.





## CHAPTER VII.

### THE NATURAL SUCCESSOR.

“ Precious lesson, wrote the master,  
Hath my mill thus given me;  
Showing how our Christ can gather  
Vilest hearts from land or sea.

“ In some heavenly alembic,  
Snowy white from crimson bring,  
Stamp his name on each, and bring them  
To the palace of the king.”



THE heart of the sons of men being fully set in them to do evil, the progress of the inner error marks itself by gradual and infallible signs in the outer life. He who has departed from early righteous training into paths of wickedness, one by one lets go the honest early habits and gives more and more external token of

the idols he has set up in his heart. Behold this change in Tom Beck and his family. Tom, like others, proved that it is impossible to serve God and mammon: for gain's sake he had done persistent violence to his conscience, and had hardened his heart; and the mere desire of standing well with his fellow-men, could not cover up all outer signs of this hardening. From sheer force of habit, once he had read his Bible, but his Bible and his ways were at war; and now the book was never opened. Once he had gone morning and evening to the house of God; now only an occasional morning found him in his place. Once he had given to the Bible and Tract Societies, and to the cause of missions. Now Tom said he was willing to give, but that he wanted to see where his money went to, and his givings became such things as could be seen by his fellow townsmen in the village of Ryreson. They earned him the reputation of public spirit, and in one way or another they returned to his own pocket. The deterioration of Tom was

reflected in his family. Nurse Ross now never attended church. She said she was needed at the house to look after the children, so that their mother 'wadna be fashed;' to mark the ways of the maid servant, of whom she had a chronically poor opinion, and 'to see to the dinner;' besides she said she 'was asthmatic, and also subject to dizziness.' Agnes usually went to morning service. Bribes of pictures, books and pennies got the three boys to Sunday-school, but rarely ever to church; these three juveniles did as they pleased. Family government was unknown. They tore in and out of the house, contradicted their parents, were saucy to Nurse Ross, bellowed instead of speaking, went to school when it pleased them, and at all times had free access to the brewery. There the men laughed at their impudence, were not chary before them of either profanity or vulgar language, let them taste what and where they liked the products of the establishment, and tacitly encouraged them in growing up desperadoes. Their

cherished friend was little Jem Waller, a stout, bright, handsome boy : since his sister's death doubly the idol of his parents' hearts. Indeed this sole scion of the house of Waller was the finest child in Ryreson. He united his mother's bold beauty and insinuating address, to his father's mental shrewdness. Attentive at school and ready at his books, he was the favorite of his teachers : an inborn love of pleasing saved him from the impertinence and coarseness in which the Beck boys indulged. Jem's hat was always off when he met a lady ; he would pick up any child that tumbled over, or any cane or parcel that an old man let fall : he was liberal with his liberally supplied pocket money, and held the place of village favorite, which had once been held by Tom Beck.

Waller had entirely ceased going to church, and while he did not publicly express himself against the minister, in his own household he was not reserved in declaring his hatred of the man and all his opinions ; and as children are not slow to catch a 'family tone,' Jem

held himself more aloof from the pastor than from any other man in the village, and was less influenced by him. The boy went sometimes to morning church with his mother, who attended 'because it was respectable;' the rest of the day he read anything that came to hand, rambled along the fields or creek with the Becks, or listened to his father and Tom discussing business, not infrequently vouchsafing his own opinion.

The boy's best friend was Uncle Nebby North. Uncle Nebby's great-grand nephews were less respectful to the old man than could have been desired; they plundered his currant and gooseberry bushes, climbed his young fruit trees, and set at naught his counsels, and were a grief of heart to him, as aforetime were the daughters of Heth to Isaac and Rebecca. Jem Waller, on the other hand, was fond of the little gray gardener. He might often have been seen wandering along the garden walks, following the old man at his work; and whatever of good was in the boy, Uncle Nebby stirred up and

strengthened. On the one hand the evil associations of the brewery, and his habit, held from babyhood, of drinking beer, strove for the conquest of this child's spirit, and on the other hand strove and counselled Uncle Nebby, his oddly chosen friend. The position of "family idol," held at home by Jem Waller, was in Tom Beck's house occupied by the youngest child, a sickly little girl who had taken the place of the one buried in the summer, when brewers' crows proved so fatal to Ryreson children. The fragility of this little Fanny, the memory of her dead sister, and the strong contrast which she offered to her obstreperous brothers, all commended her to a first position, in her parents' affections. With Nurse Ross she was the sole object in life, and seldom out of the old woman's arms.

When little Fanny was two years old, there was a sudden excitement in the town, spreading from Tom Beck's house. Where was Doctor Kidder? Where was Mrs. Hugh Richardson, skilled in emergencies? Nurse

Ross had fallen on the stone walk with Fanny in her arms. Nurse was now a very heavy woman, and she had fallen on the child. The little creature was seriously hurt. A messenger galloped off post haste to bring a consulting physician from the nearest town. Mrs. Waller was over at Mrs. Becks; Tom was home from the brewery. The boys were dispatched to Uncle Nebby's, and were suddenly sobered by 'something dreadful.'

Nine o'clock on a warm June night. The moon is full: the boys have come home and have been put to bed. Tom lies on a lounge in the dining-room; if he is asleep it is a sleep where dreams come. Up-stairs a little couch is spread before the side window, and on it is the babe Fanny, quiet at last. Beside the couch kneels Nurse Ross; a deep sob shaking her frame every now and again. She knows too well the reason of that fall, which openly all have agreed to call 'giddiness,' and 'incipient apoplexy.' Agnes is standing in the front window; the lamp in the bed-room is turned low; the

moonlight falls through the vines over her face; now set in despair, now convulsed by woe, now distorted by rage. Fierce is the strife in Agnes' soul. She knows also the reason of that fall. Her child has been sacrificed, and by Nurse Ross; and one instant she feels full of fury, ready to denounce the unhappy woman, to load her with reproaches, to drive her from the door; and then again comes up the thought, who has been her one tender, self-forgetting mother—who has lived only for Agnes, and for her children—who has been ready to deny herself everything for them;—who lies now in deeper anguish than Nurse Ross? The gate opens and closes gently, and a little gray figure moves up the walk in the broad moonlight. Agnes glides softly down-stairs and out into the garden, to anticipate any sound in her sorrow-smitten house.

“I could not sleep without coming again to ask after the child,” says Uncle Nebby.

“She is quieter,” replied Agnes, in a hard tone.

“Ah, that is well; God grant that she may recover.”

“It is too much!” burst forth Agnes, moving farther down the walk; “we have spoken to the doctors: we forced them to say the truth; and her spine is injured, and if she lives she will be crippled and deformed.”

“God help you, Agnes!” said Uncle Nebby, who had followed after her as she spoke, still moving from the house. Agnes clasped her hands, and a wail broke forth. “My girl! my little girl! my poor, baby daughter! Oh, Uncle Nebby, I feel as if I could kill that woman! Uncle Nebby, I I know how it was; Nurse Ross was drunk. She had taken so much beer this morning, and nothing else, that she was tipsy and fell when she stumbled. O, she has ruined my child. I hate her, I must hate her!”

Uncle Nebby silently took Agnes' hand and led her to an arbor near the gate, and placed her on a seat. Then he sat by her and laid a hand on her shoulder. Agnes burst into a storm of dry sobs.

“Agnes,” said the old man, “let us leave this little child’s case in the hands of God, who loves her. If she dies, she will go in peace to the bosom of our Lord, who called the little children, and, heaven is far fairer than earth. If she lives, all care and love will soothe her life and make it happy, in spite of affliction. This very misfortune may bring her nigher to God, Agnes, and make her life holier. But, Agnes, there was once another baby girl, left motherless, and I never saw her out of one kind woman’s arms. There was no blood tie between them, but night and day that woman nursed the child. Agnes, remember how Nurse Ross served you. When your father died, at my gate, she offered all her savings to support you; she offered to support you by the labor of her hands; no mother could have been better; she stood between you and hard work; she gloried in your marriage and in your happiness; she first received your children in her arms; sick and well she nursed you all. Did you ever lose a

night's sleep when Nurse Ross could come and mind a sick or dying child? Did ever a grandmother set greater store by children than she by yours? And, Agnes, my girl, how does Nurse Ross feel now? Has she not fairly worshipped little Fanny? Will she ever be happy again? Don't she feel her pain nigh as you feel it, and she has more—the pain of remorse, and of self blame?"

"Oh, Uncle Nebby, I know it, I know it!" groaned Agnes. "I do try and think of all this, and then I look at my child, my poor ruined girl baby, and—oh, Uncle Nebby!"

"I've more yet to deal out to you, Agnes," went on Uncle Nebby. "This fault is not *all* hers; you have done a great wrong to Nurse Ross. Hear me, Agnes. Nurse Ross was a quiet, sober, excellent woman; not a word was breathed against her; she was healthy and comfortable. Tom went into this brewing: you tempted her by beer, always in your house; the habit of her early life was renewed; she set such store by your

interest, that she wanted to prove the use of beer healthy and right; she wanted to give an example of using it. Tom made beer; you lived on beer money. Nurse Ross felt that every body ought to buy your beer; she used it, and praised it, and tried to make it popular and respectable by her example; the habit grew on her; she isn't healthy and comfortable; she is fat, dizzy, and short-winded; she's in danger of losing her life by apoplexy. She takes too much, and is ashamed of herself; she has been led to wrong doing; she keeps away from church; instead of a good, happy, respected, old age, she was growing bad enough, and now has this awful trouble of which she has been the cause. Oh, Agnes, you and Tom are to blame for Nurse Ross, and I fear for many more. Things will go from bad to worse. Wont you take this warning—wont you get Tom out of this bad business?"

"Uncle Nebby, it's no use talking," said Agnes, excitedly. "All you say may be true, I suppose it *is* true, but Tom can't get

out of brewing ; he is all mixed up in it ; he would be ruined if he broke it up."

" Better ruined for this world than for the next, Agnes ; better property ruined, than children ruined."

Agnes shuddered. " Other people are in brewing, and nothing bad comes of it."

" Don't say that, Agnes—nothing but bad comes of it."

" Well, uncle, we wont argue ; perhaps it does, and perhaps it don't ; but one cannot get Tom out of it. There's no use talking, he would only get angry. Tom isn't what he was once, he is harder, and—and different every way, and I don't wonder ; everybody is tormenting him about his business ; the minister is always flinging at it, and it isn't fair ; and sometimes I think I'll never go to church again. Why can't we be let alone?"

" I'm sore afraid, Agnes, that you'll look back to this night as a time when you might have brought back Tom, and would not—and you'll mourn too late."

" I tell you I could not, uncle, if I tried—

it would be the same as confessing he'd been wrong all the time, and it would ruin him. Besides, he's making lots of money, and we need money, with all these children, and more than ever, with one—a cripple."

Agnes gave a dry sob, and rose to go in.

"Agnes, my girl, are you in a better frame of mind to poor Nurse Ross? Don't add to her misery."

"No, uncle, I will not. You have said—the truth—I shall keep silence—we *do* owe her a great deal."

"Bless God for that, and may He change your heart in other things. Let us pray for that, Agnes."

"It won't do any good," said Agnes, in a hard tone, moving away.

"I will pray for you. Good-night," said Uncle Nebby.

But Agnes was too miserable to say, "Good night."

Weeks passed on. Little Fanny slowly struggled for life—a humpback. A shadow lay on all the dwelling, but deepest perhaps

on Nurse Ross. The poor woman's hair grew white, deep lines were graven on her face, and her eyes were full of woe. She never dared carry the child again, but she held her, or sat by her, hour after hour. Her beer she took, even more of it than ever. Uncle Nebby came oftener to the house, and poor Fannie made him her chief favorite. The little gray gardener would come with a bright posey, or a tiny basket of fruit, and bend over the little white bed, and its whiter faced sufferer; and Fanny would lift up two hands, like bird's claws, and a wan smile would grow over the thin, unchildish face.

Relapsing by degrees into something of his olden and long interrupted intimacy with Nurse Ross, Uncle Nebby begged her to leave off her use of beer, and did not hesitate to speak of its ruinous effects upon her.

"It's all true, an' more than you say, Maister North," replied the poor woman; "but I canna gie it up; I hanna strength o' wull; I drink it the noo to droon my grievin' over the bairnie. Wae's me!"

One morning, while Fannie was pulling to pieces a bunch of chrisanthemums, Nurse Ross said to Uncle Nebby, in confidence, "Maister North, I ha' made a new wull. I ha' a thousand dollars o' my ain, an' I'll ne'er touch a farden o't. And I bid Squire Judd mak' my wull, and I ha' left it all to puir wee Fanny, God help the ruined bairnie!"

This set Uncle Nebby thinking. Tom might be making money now, but Uncle Nebby believed that the triumphing of the wicked is short; he felt sure that what was gotten for no fair equivalent, would melt in its owner's hands like hoar frost. Even if Tom rolled up and bequeathed a fortune, those three evil-minded little boys, Judd, Samuel and Hiram, would scatter it to the four winds in a short space of time. If little Fanny lived, she could never hope for a married home, nor be able to support herself. Uncle Nebby went home, opened a blue pine desk, once the property of Tom's mother, took out a yellow document, marked, ' My last Will and Testament—Nebuchadnezzar

North," tore it up, and betook himself to Squire Judd without loss of time. There he had another instrument drawn up, devising his house and garden, his furniture, his little bank stock, all whereof he might die possessed, to Fanny Beck, his great-grand niece.

"And Squire," he said, "I want you to tie it up so that she can't give it away, nor sell it, nor lend it, so that any one can strip her of it, and leave her destitute, poor lamb!"

"Why, Tom's got plenty of cash to leave her, or will have," said the Squire, "but I can tie this up for you, North. You must leave it for her sole use, and choose an heir for it after she is done with it."

"Then," said Uncle Nebby, "she is to have the use of all, all her life, and when she is dead, there must be enough of it taken to bury her properly, and let the Bible Society have the rest. Now you tie it tight, Squire."

The Squire "tied it tight," laughing as he did so. "What will be this poor little house, and that four thousand, possibly, in compari-

son with the big fortune Tom Beck is bound to roll up for his children."

Next to Uncle Nebby, little Fanny chose for her favorite visitors the minister and his wife. Her face brightened most at their coming, and she took most graciously their little gifts. Their tender interest in her child seemed to soothe somewhat of Agnes' cherished irritation against them: even Tom looked more kindly when he met them, and appeared a little oftener at church.

"That's right, Tom; go if you can; it looks well, and some of the firm had better go to church. The people here are used to it, and if you can stand the minister, why go; but I cannot put up with him. We have to sit in the pews and can't answer back; and I say it ain't fair for him to stand there firing away at us from the pulpit." Thus discoursed Waller.

And what now was the cause of complaint? Wherein had the minister offended? A great wave of temperance principle was rising up over the land. Men were suddenly

learning that millions of human souls were rushing to everlasting death on the drunkard's broad highway. A feeling of responsibility for these helpless ones was entering Christian hearts, and in the fore front of this grand battle with spiritual death and temporal and physical destruction, stood Tom Beck's pastor.

Once the temperance question could hardly have been mooted in Ryreson. Intemperance there had been unknown; but since Tom Beck's brewery had been established, this blessed state of affairs had sadly changed. Bundy and wife were likely to prove only the first of a long line of drunkards in perverted Arcadia. Not only several of the workmen and their wives were drunken, noisy, and beggarly, but around the steps of "The Pint and Pot" hung daily half-a-dozen toppers, who drifted in from the country, and drank and gossiped while their farms were going to ruin. Young Peters at the store was stout, red-faced, quarrelsome; a confirmed beer drinker. The little

boys of the village were growing up rampant young rowdies. The minister felt that it was time to cry aloud and spare not. Temperance societies, pledges, temperance lectures, temperance literature, all these were arms taken against the grand danger that in Ryreson had put on the guise of "Beck's beer." To attack the beer trade, Tom and Waller held was to make a direct attack upon themselves and their way of making a living; they claimed that out of courtesy to them, as his hearers and fellow-citizens, the minister should have kept silence, even while he saw that their manufactures were destroying the souls and bodies of others of his hearers.

"Why, confound it," said James Waller, "why can't he let every man take care of himself? I never saw such a trade as the ministry, flying in the teeth of decent money-making people, just because a few men want to make beasts of themselves."

So Jim Waller held aloof from the minister, and little Jem, catching the paternal tone,

avoided him also, and considered that the church and the Sunday-school were leagued against his respectable parent. Uncle Nebby felt as if he alone were left to try and snatch this little child as a brand from the burning. He strove more and more to make his garden an attractive resort, and Jem was often found there.

“Yes,” says little Jem, “I do read my Bible, Uncle Nebby. My Sunday-school teacher gave it to me for learning most verses; oh, I like the Bible. Of course I say my prayers. My Sunday-school teacher taught me—I always say ‘em. ‘Course I spects the Lord hears me, but I don’t know what you mean by serving him. No, I wouldn’t say bad words, mother don’t like that, and I don’t tell lies, that’s mean. There can’t be any harm in walking around Sundays, my father does that; and it isn’t wrong to use beer, father and mother do that, and they’re good people. ‘Course I’ll be a good man when I grow up, but not like the minister; though I’d like him, only father says

he meddles. Why, I know there isn't any harm in beer, Mr. North, nor in whiskey either, only when they're used wrong; anything can be used wrong; father's known men who died of using cold water wrong." These were some of little Jem's opinions, freely expressed to Uncle Nebby, and Uncle Nebby was in a strait between two; he was far from desiring to sow discord in a family, or to teach the son to dishonor the parent, and yet all this parent's ways were sure to be ways of ruin to the child.

"Oh Lord, my God," prayed Uncle Nebby, "keep this child from the evil that is in the world."

"What do you mean by that, Uncle Nebby?" asked Jem, who, following closely on the old man's steps, had heard his prayer.

"You wouldn't want to grow up to a wicked man, my boy?"

"Oh, no," said Jem, and after reflection, added, "I had rather die." Still pondering, he continued, "I don't think it is so very bad to die; I think little Fanny had better

have died than live a poor little humpback ; it would be nicer up among the good angels. Sometimes when I lie on the grass and look up into the blue sky, I think it would be best to go and live in the nice world God has made up there ; then you couldn't be bad, Uncle Nebby, and you wouldn't hear one saying one thing was right, and another another."

"Poor little man," mused Uncle Nebby, as Jem marched smartly off, singing a roundelay about "Billy Boy," "poor little man. I think sometimes the Lord takes little people like that out of the world, when he don't find any other way of straightening up their affairs, and keepin' them in the road to glory."

Was it for this reason that little Jem Waller's life was short ? And why was it that it closed in darkness ; is it thus that parents' sins fall on children's blameless heads, and that he who spreads a trap to catch his neighbors' sons causes his own children to fall therein ?

Jem Waller was missing one summer day ; he had been in the brewery in the morning, for it was vacation, and he had his fishing line with him. He was not to be found at dinner ; no one had seen him ; the afternoon wore on and he did not come, and Tom Beck, with a sudden terror, looking down upon the race from the bridge, saw Jim's cap caught in a bush drooping over the water side. He was not likely to drown ; he could swim, and this bridge was right amid the busy works where men were going to and fro. Still Tom felt a chill at his heart, and called out men to search for the child. In the midst of this searching Jim Waller came up, having been at the post-office waiting the arrival of the "Golden Fly." He rushed along elate at what he esteemed good business news, and as he approached the race and the bridge, a sudden silence fell on the searchers. The race was here and now unusually wide and deep. Along either side the men were walking, carefully moving long poles in the water.

“What’s the matter?” cried Waller.  
“Anything lost?”

There was no answer. One man turned his eyes toward the little wet cap that had been hung on the bridge.

“Why, what’s wrong!” demanded Waller, “all dumb?”

“We are worried about little Jem,” said Tom Beck. “I suppose he’s all right, but we can’t find him, and his cap was in the water—and—well, I thought we’d look.”

“There’s nothing wrong!” said Waller, huskily, and growing ghastly pale. “Why, my Jem can swim like a fish.”

“See here,” said Nick Ray, one of the men, “I’ll dive—I’m good at that.”

He went up on the bridge and plunged off. In a minute he rose, climbed the race bank and went back to the bridge. As he stood ready to dive again he made a sign to Tom Beck. Tom went down to Waller, took him by the arm and turned his face away from the water. In another moment Nick rose, holding the limp body of little

Jem. In one dead hand was twisted his fishing line, the other was clutched full of some weed that grew on the bottom. A cry of dismay went up as the child was laid on the bank. Waller was on his knees by him in a minute, rubbing his hands, breathing in his mouth, pulling at the wet clothes.

“Don’t, Jim, don’t,” groaned Tom Beck, “it’s too late. He’s been gone for hours.”

The men were off, one for the doctor, one for the minister, another to call Mrs. Hugh Richardson, and Nick Ray to tell the unhappy mother. Others took a shutter off the brewery office, and brought a shawl to throw over the body, as they slowly carried it home. Evidently little Jem had fallen from the bridge. But why no cry? Why did not the bold little fellow come to the surface and swim? It seemed that when he fell he went heavily down, clutched the mass of firmly rooted weeds at the bottom, and held himself thus under the water. What had hindered the use of his ordinary reason, and left him only the instinct of holding fast

by something? The pitiful story came out by degrees; the children had been at the brewery, and had been given some beer of a new kind, upon which Waller was trying some flavoring experiment. Jem seemed to fancy the drink, and the men got laughing and betting about "what the child could take; what a strong head he had, how he had been used to it from a baby, and so on," until he had been incited to drink much more than he was accustomed to, and consequently left the sample room almost overcome by the liquor. Probably the fumes mounted rapidly to his head, and as he leaned over the bridge to fish he became giddy and fell. Deprived of his reason, he grasped convulsively the first thing which touched his hands, which was the fatal growth under the water. The whole village mourned for the little victim. The parents were distracted. The next morning the pastor called at the house, and Mrs. Richardson begged him to wait a little while in the parlor, if, perchance, she could quiet the

raving mother sufficiently to see him. Entering softly the room where the dead boy lay, the pastor found Uncle Nebby sitting at the head of the coffin. The two men looked for a short time in silence at the fair young sleeper. Then said Uncle Nebby :

“ Parson, I’ve been turning over in my mind the story in Scriptor, d’ye mind, where it says to the wife of Jeroboam, ‘ I am sent to thee with heavy tidings :’ and it goes on, ‘ the child shall die, and all Israel shall mourn for him, and bury him, because in him there is found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel, in the house of Jeroboam.’ Oh, minister, there was a deal that seemed good in this poor little chap. I mind he told me he always read his Bible and said his prayers, and he b’lieved God heard him, and he’d rather die than grow up wicked: and that when he lay on the grass, lookin’ up into the blue sky, he thought it would be nice to live up there, where all was good. Oh, parson, don’t you think there’s hope for the wee chap? He’s only nine years old, and the evil

that was in him other people put there, and taught him, and no wonder he saw some things wrong, when his own parents taught him that way ; and it 'pears to me that the good Lord has taken him away from the evil to come, and seein' it unpossible for him to grow up right here, has taken him to a good land and better teaching."

The minister did not make prayer for the dead, but, as Uncle Nebby went on telling him of his little friend's mind, painfully groping after truth, he laid his hand on the broad white brow, and said, as Joseph said to Benjamin, "God be gracious unto thee, my son."

Such a funeral as followed little Jem Waller, and such burial display had never before been seen in Ryreson. It seemed as if the parents could not lavish money enough on their dead child. Waller appeared to find some relief in talking to his fellow-townsmen about the monument which he should order from the city.

"I'll have a full size statue of him in white

marble, standing just as he was that last day, with his fishing line in his hand;" he said, one evening, when a knot of acquaintances were gathered by Hugh Richardson's door.

"No, no, Mr. Waller," said Uncle Nebby, eagerly, "make it this a way. If full size statoo you will have, make him lyin' on the grass, with his arm under his head, a gazing up into the sky. I mind often seeing him that way, lying on the grass in my garden, and he told me he liked to look up and think what a rare fine place God had made heaven, and how the good angels were there, and he'd like to be there too."

Waller put his hat over his face, and began to weep at this picture of his child. Hugh Richardson said, "I think that would be prettier, Waller, and far less liable to destruction or injury from the weather than a standing statue."

And this suggestion was accepted, and thus, at a great expense, Waller ordered the monument of his boy.

For a time Waller's interest in business

slacked: he felt a kind of hatred to the brewery, and both himself and his wife talked of leaving Ryreson. But the village was associated with the whole life of their child, and there his body and his sisters' lay; this held them to the fatal spot. Now was a time when Waller's influence towards keeping Tom Beck in his dangerous business was relaxed. In his pain and restlessness Waller might have welcomed any change which would give a new current to his thoughts. The minister, Uncle Nebby and Hugh Richardson, saw now a golden opportunity for persuading Tom to give up brewing and change the establishment into some kind of a factory. The idea of cloth-making was revived, and Uncle Nebby advocated the claims of a paper mill. These friends, with Tom and Waller, were talking over the matter one evening at Hugh Richardson's. Waller took some interest in it, as diverting his mind from his great trouble.

“Why not,” said Uncle Nebby; “turn

the thing into a paper-mill? I'll invest in it what I've laid up."

"And I would invest in either paper-mill or cloth-factory," said Richardson; "I believe you to be shrewd business men, Tom and Waller, and if I liked your trade, I'd gladly put a few thousands into it."

"I always was taken by the paper business," said Uncle Nebby: "it seems to follow God's plan of making, as one may say, something out of nothing; as God did at creation; or much out of little, as he does each year, when from the few sown seeds he brings an hundred fold the harvest. You see you take a few poor rags that are nothing to anybody, and from them you make paper, that is useful to everybody. You take foul, dirty scraps, and out of them you turn out great, fair, white sheets, on which to write sermons, or good books, or letters of comfort. It 'minds me of man's vile wicked nature being taken in hand by our Lord Jesus, and brought out meet for his service, a heart written with the love of God. The vile rags

that children gather in the gutters, not fit to touch, are put in one end of the mill, and out of the other they come, delicate sheets of paper, fit for kings to write on; a present fit for any lady. This paper mill business teaches plenty of lessons; it gives good profit, employment to many people, and teaches folks to be saving of rags and scraps, that otherwise they'd throw away."

"But," said Tom, "Waller and I don't understand this paper business."

"You could go partners, and take a foreman," said the minister.

"But we're making money as we are," said Tom; "why should we change? Change would be at an immense expense."

"But would be a saving of your fortunes in the long run, perhaps," said Richardson; "and your present business is not the right kind, nor for the good of the community—it bears bitter fruit."

"What do you think of all this talk?" said Tom to Waller, who had been for two years

his partner, as they walked homeward together.

“I don’t know what to think,” said Waller ; “I long to get at something new,—to change my thoughts and divert me from my troubles. Then again I feel as though I did not care for business, nor for profit, nor for anything. There was a time when I felt every dollar made was for *him* ; when I wanted to build up the business against a day when *he* would come into it, sharp little business head that he had ! But it isn’t fair to you, Tom, to give up. You’ve got three boys to do for, and I can’t go back on you and your interests. Do as you choose.”

“You’ll feel better after a while, and fall into your own old ways,” said Tom ; “you must keep your courage up.”

This was the golden opportunity for a change : it was pressed hard upon Tom by his best friends : but to change would be to admit himself to have been wrong : to change would cost him money, and yearly Tom clung more and more to money, with all the

Beck tenacity. The golden opportunity passed unheeded. As Tom had said, Waller returned to his old business ways: he had always been a hard worker, a shrewd schemer; to make money was second nature to him; and now, while there was no one for whom to lay up a fortune, the old habit resumed its sway. Yet added to this was a feverish uneasiness, a passion of unrest that wanted something new and absorbing, to hinder thinking. This craving was met in Tom's soul by the Beck greed, grown with his growing years, crying like the leech's daughters, 'give, give,' and never satisfied. And what these two men did was what they had always secretly looked forward to doing. They enlarged their business *in its own line*. Besides the great brewery they set up a greater *distillery*, for a *distillery* is a brewery's NATURAL SUCCESSOR.





## CHAPTER VIII.

### FIRST FRUITS OF THE HARVEST.

“ Turn, turn, my wheel ! Turn round and round !  
Without a pause, without a sound :  
So spins the flying world away !  
This clay, well mixed with marl and sand,  
Follows the motion of my hand ;  
For some must follow, and some command,  
Though all are made of clay !”



**A**GAIN a summer evening and along the once favored valley the “ Golden Fly ” rolls into Ryreson. It glides past fields of wheat ready for harvesting, past orchards and meadow land, by thriving farm houses, and here and there by a home-stead smitten with a strange and premature decay. Here are fields of long-bearded silvery barley, its heads dropping low as if in sorrow over its destiny—corrupted and

corrupting. Here are fields where beautiful hop vines climb up their poles, and wave their graceful tasseled banners out, a thing that God made for man's using, and man has cultivated for his destruction. Here were also acres after acres of corn, the erect, comely, crested maize, standing in serried ranks along the level lands; the earth's best gold, bread for a hungry million, destined to go into Tom Beck's distillery, and turn to liquid fire, to subtle poison, to pour forth a fatal and burning flood to roll thousands of souls down to the pains of hell.

There were no passengers in the stage. It swept slowly on, and Jean Clerc leaned back in his seat, sorrow on his wrinkled face, and in his deep-set black eyes, as he looked on the scenes unfolding along the familiar road. "For the last time," said Jean Clerc, The sun was setting, the distant hills stood purple under a dome of greenish blue; rose-colored lines of light ran up to the zenith; north and south stretched masses as of molten gold, while in the west blazed crimson fires,

Jean Clerc gazed long ; he came of a beauty-loving race. He was nearing the stream—he withdrew his eyes from the splendid panorama of the sky. The meadow lay in the red light as if soaked in blood ; the stream ran red like Iser when the field of Linden had been fought ; from the great chimneys of the distillery and brewery smoke and sparks poured forth ; the stench of brewer's mash and other rotten matter filled the air ; the wheel of the flour mill turned lazily, and the miller was alone there in his paper cap and dusty clothes ; the saw in the lumber mill was quiet, and the men had gone home ; but business roared on in the distillery, where now the fires glowed and men toiled seven days in the week. A drunken wretch was staggering home ; an angry, half tipsy farmer was scolding at "Beck and Waller" in the office door, and a loud bawling of oaths came from two men who were marking barrels in a yard surrounded by a huge fence. "For the last time," said Jean Clerc ; and he drove on, and carefully now, where the

“Golden Fly” bounced heavily over two lines of iron rails, under a wooden arch—“Look out for the locomotive,”—past a platform and wooden building meant for a depot, and up the street of Ryreson ; past two grog shops, past two fighting boys, past three slatternly women coming from the shops ; past the post-office where cigars and tobacco were for sale ; past “Peters’ dry goods and notion store,” where Peters junior, though now middle-aged, looked half drunk as he waited on a customer ; and so up to the “Pint and Pot,” where the front porch was in sore disorder, and where a hostler with a bruised eye stood waiting for the horses. “For the last time,” said Jean Clerc, as he climbed down from the box.

“Supper ready, Madame Peters?” cried Jean Clerc.

“Well, no, Monsure Clerc, I’m sorry to say it ain’t ; but come you in, and I’ll have it soon, if I cook it with my own hands. You’ll not blame *me*, if you know all I’ve had to put up with this wretched day. Sit ye

down, Monsure; I meant to give you my best, to-night; but, bless my life, what can one calculate on that keeps a tavern, with a score of noisy, tipsy, fighting fellows' bouncing in and out! It's hard lines, making money that way, I can tell you, Monsure;" and Mrs. Peters stood to narrate her woes, without giving sign of preparing supper. Jean Clerc sat down on the porch and wiped his face, while a man came from the kitchen and began to clean up around the room. The landlady went on volubly. "What do you think, Monsure—here, this afternoon, old Saul Wing, which is getting to be as big a toper as ever lived, and hanging about here days when he ought to be minding his farm—what does he do but drink himself drunk, and having emptied a beer bottle, instead of throwing it out of the door, though what call he had to throw it at all, I don't know—he gives it a fling right through the glass of our window. Immejit he picks up another to toss the same manner, when Peters he naturally interferes, so old Wing he ups with

a bottle and bangs Peters on the head, and there it is. Dr. Kidder sent for, Peters in bed with his head tied up; windows, and bottles, and a chair broken; the hostler knocked on the head, while they was securing Wing; and Wing finally tied and pitched into a cart on a truss of hay, and sent home. I tell you, Monsure, we need a jail here for such vagabones, and a constable, too. And that ain't all; my cook's drunk and lying in bed this blessed minute; and what with putting Peters to bed, and looking after the rumpus generally, not a hand's turn done to getting supper; but you'll not be kept waiting long now, Monsure."

"Never mind, madame," said Jean Clerc, sick at heart. "I shall go over to Monsieur Richard-son, who will give me my souper for this last time. Here do I come back and stay ze night. Ze "Golden Fly" does not go on to-night—to-morrow we go on, never to come this route more. It ees ze last time."

"Oh, stay, stay, Monsure; we will make

you comfortable!" cried Mrs. Peters, really distressed.

"No, no, not now," said Jean, "*Je ne puis pas*, so much wiskey—eet makes me seek."

Jean walked off to Hugh Richardson's, where he was made welcome by the family, who were seated at supper. After tea they adjourned to the piazza.

"It ees ze last time, Monsieur Richardson," said Jean, "*ma jolie mouche d'or* shall never travel this route again; ze big iron horse to-morrow rolls up to Ryreson. I am not sorry never to come here again. I cannot see without misery ze changes here. I do not mind ze iron horse, ze world will be better maybe for iron horses; but I mind ze houses going to ruin; ze bloated face of Saul Wing, once un brave homme. I mind ze roars and fires, and smells of ze brewery and ze distillery; I mind ze grog shops, and ze noisy tavern, and all ze bad sights here, where once all was quiet, and good, and flourishing, as eef ze Lord had given ze good garden back to men."

“Yes,” said Hugh Richardson, “this is a sample of the ruin that is spread through the whole land by the manufacture of strong drink. Saul Wing was in here to-day drinking himself drunk, and treating everybody because of the money that the railroad had paid him for the right of way through his farm. He drank “Beck and Waller’s health” as benefactors of the township; but the truth is, that Saul Wing to-day is not worth one copper more than he was fifteen years ago, when Tom came into old Hiram’s money; whatever he has made in railroad and in whiskey, he has lost by drinking and inattention to business. His farm is absolutely running down, and in five years he will be worth much less than he is now.”

“And there is my friends at ze inn, once ze ‘Sheaf of Wheat,’ now ze ‘Pint and Pot.’ I could weep: Madame Peters was so neat, so brisk, so gay: she cook her own meals fit for a princess; all was contentment. Now here is broke windows, broke heads, drunk

cooks, no tea, complaints, dirty porch, worry all trouble. Ze son, he is bloated and cross, he will die drunkard."

"There is a terrible change ; it is in the place. Ah, good evening, Doctor Kidder ; we were just saying what a change has come over Ryreson within fifteen years."

"Greatest change that ever I saw, in twenty years, since my coming," said the doctor, sitting down. "It was a little Paradise when I settled here : almost no practice ; but one could live here comfortably on a mere trifle. Now, as to practice, if I hadn't your son, Richardson, for a student, able to help me in some matters, I could not go my rounds. Not that it is a very paying practice, for half these new people don't pay. I never saw such a change in the health of a place, and in the death rate ! This new lot of people are not a healthy kind : their families are not sound, and there are accidents and injuries in fights among them. But the village folk are not so healthy as formerly. Every summer there is some epidemic among the

children; and there are fevers; and one trouble, and then another."

"Brewers' and distillers' milk and meat," said Hugh, "and unlimited beer drinking."

"I cannot say about that," said Dr. Kidder. "It is true that your family are perfectly healthy, and you never use the beer, nor milk, nor beef, from the company. Perhaps you are right. I will not say. Your son has your notions, and when he begins to practice here, he will prescribe no liquor for his patients. But see here, Richardson; some of you town fathers must come to the rescue. We must have provision made for doctoring the poor, who cannot pay. Your son will tell you how it is. I am likely to be ruined by it. Day and night I am called off for folks who do not and cannot pay me a cent; and dollars and dollars' worth of medicine I must hand out to the poor wretches. It all comes out of one man, Richardson, and it won't do. These are township poor, and the township must provide for getting them doctored, and dosed. I'm ready to do

my share, and I'll doctor the poor for less than I do other people, but I cannot do it all for nothing."

"That's true," said Hugh Richardson; "you are greatly overtaxed, doctor. I know how it is. It is really singular how much medical help these people need. Walk in and sit down with us, Uncle Nebby. Now, doctor, here's the town patriarch. How much did you ever doctor him?"

"Never once," said Dr. Kidder; "he's proof."

Uncle Nebby straightened himself with some pride. "I am eighty-eight," said Uncle Nebby, "and I can do my day's work, and I am never sick. I have Peters' youngest boy, a smart fellow of twenty, he is too; and I took him to keep him away from the drunkenness there at the tavern, not because I needed him. Now I do need him. I'm not so supple as I used to be. But I'm hearty, and I lay it to out-door work, going early to bed, and to temperance. Ah, doctor, in this

ruined village, you'll soon find few who have been always temperate."

"Well," said the cautious doctor, "the village is changed, and much of it is a bad change, but I don't know about its being ruined. There is a deal more money going about than there used to be."

"But," said Hugh Richardson, "what kind of money is it? It expresses no positive good for which it was exchanged; it passes from hand to hand, but half the time it does not go for any real equivalent. When a community spends its 'money for that which is not bread, and their labor for that which satisfieth not,' then destruction is at work in its very vitals. Saul Wing's acres once brought forth bread. He sold most of this bread for money, and thrived on the remainder; his neighbors thrived on what they purchased. Now Saul sells hops and barley for beer, and corn for whiskey; he drinks a deal of liquor, and neglects his cattle, his fences, his fields, his implements, so that a slow decay is devouring the interest of the money he gets

in return for his produce. His neighbors get drunk on the product of Saul's acres; out of their drunkenness we have growing taxes, scarcity, and consequent high price of labor, a general deterioration in surrounding property. This, and Saul's support, eats into Saul's principal, neglect having eaten up the interest; consequently he gets poorer instead of richer by what his ground brings forth. Rise in value by a railroad, and a seeming return from brewery and distillery shares, will only hinder for a very little time the completion of his ruin."

"Here am I," said Jean Clerc. "I am seventy years old; stout and hearty, though I do not expect to leeve so long as Monsieur Nort. Soon I shall stop driving ze *jolie mouche d'or*. But in seventy years, I have seen much, and I have seen how ze pros-per-i-ty that comes out of liquors ees like ze bloom on ze pear too early from ze worm in ze heart. It seems ripe, eet ees only dying; eet seems pros-per-i-ty — it ees only RUIN. Monsieur Docteur? you say more monaie

comes in here now ; well, what of that ? You come and say, part of your monaie, I must have for dose and for veesit ze seek people, who are poor. Docteur, what made them seek and poor ? Ze drink. Mrs. Peters, she say, we must have a jail ; we cannot send rowdies ten miles to prison ; we must have ze jail, and ze constable ; our lives ees not safe. Shentlemen, what makes life unsafe ? What demands monaie for a jail and for a constable ? Ze drink. Last week I was here, and I heard Mr. Waller say, ‘Confound eet ! ze place will be ruined with beggars ! we have old peoples friendless, *petits infants* friendless, we have cripples ; we have incorrigibles, we have bad lot ; we cannot be so infest. We must have a poor house.’ Eh ! what makes ze need of big poor house ? Ze drink. Once, before beer and whiskey came, there was no poor house, and no need of a poor house. Bah ! ze old Squire, he says, a lawyer gets more practice now. Yes, he goes to suit for thieves, for broke heads, for debts, for all manner of bad. But

eef he gets more monaie, so, why eet costs him much more to leeve. He has taxes; he must help pay for jail, poor-house, poor doctor, constable, court, and nothing is to him so cheap as it was. Why is eet? Ze drink. Bah!"

Having thus freed his mind, Jean Clerc relapsed into silence. The minister passed the gate. "Come in, come in," cried Hugh; "come and bid our old friend Clerc good-bye. He has brought the coach through here to-night for the last time."

The minister came in and shook hands.

"Well, Clerc, has the railroad run you out of employment?"

"No, no, monsieur. I only drive a leetle farther 'on, where ze iron horse has no road to fit his shoes; but I am too old to drive much more. Next year I shall stop and live on my savings. Once I thought when that time came, to get a petit chambre and end my days in Ryreson, but I like Ryreson no more. Too much row."

"Beck and Waller," said the minister,

“have worked with all their might to get the railroad here, so they can send their barrels to market. . And now they are agitating a change of the county seat, to bring it here to Ryreson, and I fancy they’ll succeed. There are no buildings suitable where it is, and they say we need a jail and a poor-house and court sittings, and a police here at Ryreson, and I’m afraid we do. I have been at Beck’s. I found that the men had demanded a supper and a big treat all round to-morrow, in honor of the first train coming in, and that treat means plenty of whiskey and all drunk. I went to Beck to remonstrate. It is dangerous to the village. He admitted that, but said these things were customary, and that if he offended the men by refusing, he might get the worst of it. Some of them were desperate fellows and might burn his house, and then run away. I asked him why keep such men, and he said, ‘Distillery hands were usually like that, one couldn’t take their pick in that business.’ I said to him I thought that told against the business.”

“What did he say to that?” asked Jean Clerc.

“Nothing. He knows it is a bad business.”

“Dear, dear!” said Dr. Kidder, “I am sorry about this treat. Ray’s wife is low with fever, and the uproar will be nearly sure to kill her, and the poor soul has three small children. Then the last grand treat, when the distillery opened, you remember? Then they managed to set Wing’s barn on fire and burned it up, and two horses in it, and no one ever found out the guilty man. After that treat, I had a man laid up six weeks with a wounded eye. I had one broken arm—and I’ve never had a cent for attending that arm case—and here in town were two half-grown lads badly burned in the hands at the fire. And talking of fires, if things go on this way, and if they bring the county seat here, we shall have to get up a fire company, and have an engine and an engine house.”

“And when did one hear of a fire here

before ze drink came here?" demanded Clerc. "Set down on ze bill against drink, one engine and house, and one fire company—and ze loss of property in fires. You will soon see how ze drink costs all that it does come to."

Here came a deep groan from Uncle Nebby, whose head rested on the hands clasped over the top of his stout cane. The groan set Jean Clerc to thinking.

"Monsieur, Richard-son, do you remember the day you brought that leetle boy to Ryreson? Do you remember how the pasture land and the creek lay all red as blood? To-day as I came here there was just that same red all along ze mill bottom, and eet did put in my mind that day, and ze petit garcon asleep between your knees, and all ze talk we had, and I did say that possiblement that petit garcon might be ze brand to light ruin in all ze smiling valley. You re-member, Monsieur, and what did you say? Better pitch him out! Ah, well, he was ze firebrand, poor garcon! but we can-

not pitch him out. That was what I meant by firebrand, Monsieur Nort!"

"Ah, I know, I know," said Uncle Nebby, with another groan. "Poor Tom, what hopes I had of him, and how proud I was, and I used to boast that he'd be the making of Ryreson, and he has been instead the ruin of the place, and of his children after him, I fear. Ah, minister, you know Tom sent Judd off to school, because he had the habit of drinking so much beer, and hanging so round the distillery—and, poor Judd, he has been brought up to do as he pleases, and he'll neither obey nor study, so they have expelled him, and to-morrow he is coming home. Agnes told me this evening. She was crying about it. I was there to see how Nurse Ross is."

"And how is she?" asked Hugh.

"She wont hold out long," said Doctor Kidder. "Such a pity. I would never have thought that at her age she would take to drinking. I suppose it was old country habits, and, owing to climate or something

else, we cannot do in this country as they do in the old country. As I told Nurse Ross, she might have lived ten years longer if she had not used liquor, or perhaps been moderate in her use of it."

"How many *can* be moderate?" asked Uncle Nebby. "It seems to me that this preachment about moderation is mere preachment in help of temptation. 'Touch not, taste not, handle not,' and if I may add to that, 'make not.'"

"Nurse Ross has stopped using any kind of liquor since she had her fit a year ago," said the minister.

"Yes, but she stopped too late," said Doctor Kidder.

"It's always too late unless you stop before you begin," said Uncle Nebby, and the minister added: "Well, though our poor friend did stop too late to save her body, I trust she was not too late for the saving of her soul. She seems to me a truly repentant woman; humility, penitence, faith in our Lord, seem to have been given to her. It is a pitiful

thing to sit by her death-bed, and see her one time racked by remorse; another, torn by anguished apprehension of the fate of the family to which she has been so devoted. There has been much of beautiful self-sacrifice in Nurse Ross's life, and now there is much of beautiful self-forgetting in it. She feels deeply the viciousness of Tom's boys. She talks of the time when Judd was a baby. She said to me, yesterday, 'Thank God for taking me out of the world before Judd gets worse. I feel like Hagar when she sat down in the wilderness and cried, that 'she could not see the death of the lad.' And little Fanny's devotion to her is something beautiful."

"Fanny in that family is a lily among thorns," said Hugh.

Two days after, Mrs. Peters was standing at Mrs. Richardson's gate for a friendly chat.

"No, thank you, Mrs. Richardson," said she, to that lady, who was sewing, seated on the vine-draped piazza. "I can't come in, if I do I'll stay too long. I only ran over

for a word. There were great doings last night; pity ever the railroad or anything else came here, if it's to be celebrated in such a way. I wish to mercy the days was back when we hadn't a bar nor a drop of liquor in town. It's hard lines making your money out of them. We took a deal of money in. We always do, but as I says to Peters, it is a kind of money that goes off mighty fast. We did make some money and live uncommon comfortable before we had a brewery or a bar. I wish the times was back when I kept my kitchen like wax, and the dining-room as it would have done your heart good to look at it. All that was on my mind then, was to fry the potatoes a tasty brown, and make such a cup of tea as no one else brewed; and our hams, Mrs. Richardson, were pink and solid; would delight one's eyes like a picter—not such brown, flabby meat as comes out of Beck's pasturs, let me tell you. But now, it's here a drunken servant, and there a crash of china breaking; and the half-tipsy folks that come in for a meal upset

things over the table linen, so it's wash, wash, all the time, and never clean; and butter's messed up, and bread wasted shameful, and here a glass nicked, and there a plate cracked, while in the bar-room it's tip over a chair and knock down a glass or pitcher, and Peters' can't get pay for the damage; and the wall's dirty, and window panes broke, until it takes a proper slice out of our earning, just to keep the place decent. Then, it stands to reason, that though I ain't young Peters' mother, yet being so long his step-mother, I *do* feel it to have him soaking in beer, day in and day out. He don't get mad drunk, but he does get half stupid, and a crying shame it is. Thank the Lord that Uncle Nebby North took my own son to stop with him—and there's the shame of it, Mrs. Richardson. I don't think our tavern's a good place for my boy, and I want him to keep away from it, and yet we keep it open for other folk's boys. I'd close out in a minute, but Peters is clear infatuated, and he says others would open if we shut up."

"I wish," said Mrs. Richardson, as Mrs. Peters paused, quite breathless, "that every whiskey, or beer making, or selling-place could be forever closed. They are all just so many leeches sucking out the public life!"

"Life!" cried Mrs. Peters; "life isn't worth much in this place now. I thought, for sure, they'd murder somebody in our bar last night, bellowing 'murder,' and upsetting benches. It was enough to break one's heart; and if Peters said, 'go boys, I want to shut,' out they'd roar, 'go yourself, if you're tired. We'll keep this open to morning. Only one thing's to shut, and that's your mouth;' and him with his head not well from the whack old Saul Wing gave it! This blessed day, Mrs. Richardson, from early morning, until now, it's five o'clock in the afternoon, I've cleaned at that house, puttying up windows, scrubbing, having breaks mended, and holes in the plaster fixed up. And a sad day it has been in town, I'm told. Judd Beck was drunk as a fool last night, and had Doctor Kidder tending him

this morning, and Agnes Beck nearly in fits. Poor Mrs. Ray is dead; she wasn't like to live, and the uproar finished the matter; died at noon to-day, and Nurse Ross died at three. She's been going down this long while. But it's the first time but one, that ever I knew two deaths in our place in one day, and I've lived here, girl and woman, fifty years. Thirty-five years ago, when Agnes Beck's mother, Mrs. Doctor Murtry, died, my little Catharine Jane, my first child, died that same day in a teething fit. But good times are done for Ryreson, and it's my view we'll have more deaths here than ever we thought of, and it's reasonable we should, scattering death round as *we* are by glass fulls, and young Peters by jug fulls, and them two grog-shops down the street by mug and pitcher fulls, and Beck and Waller—and bad luck to the day that ever they came here—scattering death round by barrels full, and kegs full; and many's the bushel of good corn, and the barrel of good apples that ought to .been mush, and bread and sass

now turned into death and murder—and dear knows—there's the tea bell."

And these were the first fruits of that hot harvest of wrath ripening in the future of Ryreson, and of Beck and Waller.





## CHAPTER IX.

### BLOWING UP A BUBBLE.

“Your hoards are great, your walls are strong,  
But God is just;  
The gilded chambers built by wrong  
Invite the rust.

What! know ye not the gains of crime  
Are dust and dross?  
Its ventures on the waves of time  
Foredoom'd to loss.

**N**URSE Ross was dead, and dying had spoken very solemn words to that family to whom all her life had been devoted, and through whose means her gray hairs were going down to a dishonored grave. The household had gathered about the old woman's death-bed, all but Judd, who was exhausted from the effects of his first hard drinking fit. Tom Beck came to

that death-bed, his heart in a tumult of shame over his son, anger at destruction of property, and waste of time among his men, remorse wakened by those thoughts of the past that this hour recalled. Agnes was sobbing, partly in sorrow for her aged friend, but more in sorrow for her first-born. Fanny sat on the bed-side, clasping the hand of the dying one, and calm in her faith in what the minister had told her of the mercy of a pardoning God. Hiram, the youngest boy, of a hard nature, looked on, curiosity tempered by a little awe. Samuel, the second son, of a more gentle spirit, wept bitterly, imploring Nurse Ross's pardon for the many ways in which he had vexed her, and deeply laid to heart her warnings against strong drink, and her exhortations as to God-serving. Nurse Ross saw with hope these signs of softening, and in her last words to Fanny whispered her to do her best to save Samuel. Fanny, with a tact partly natural, and partly cultivated by her physical afflictions, obeyed this injunction, and until the funeral on Saturday afternoon,

kept her brother closely near her. The faithful and touching words of the minister deepened Samuel's impressions, and at school on Sabbath morning, having the minister's wife for his teacher, and happening to be the sole member of the class present, he talked freely with her on the subject of temperance. Seeing the boy's spirit stirred, and his heart docile to instruction, the lady got him from the library a paper-covered book, where she had sewed into illustrated covers, Dr. Cheever's three articles, "Deacon Giles' Distillery," "Deacon Jones' Brewery," and "The History of John Stubbs."

From the Sunday-school Samuel went to church; and occupying the seat with his mother and Fanny, turned an intent face to the minister, who preached from this text "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment, to be punished." The fixed attention of the boy to the preaching caught the notice of Uncle Neby, who sat just behind him. The old

man thought of that look when he returned home, and in the afternoon, Peters having gone to see his mother, and Uncle Nebby's eyes not being equal to much reading, he took his cane and set off for Tom's house; saying to himself, "Who knows, the Lord may be touching the heart of the lad, and a 'word in season, how good it is.' "

Arrived at his nephew's, he found that Agnes was in her room asleep, and Tom was reading the market quotations from his daily paper. No one seemed to know where Samuel was. Fannie was in the arbor with her Bible. "I wanted Sammy to read his Sunday-school book with me, and he's gone," she said, deeply aggrieved.

"Likely he's up the creek somewhere, with Hiram," said Tom, in reply to Uncle Nebby's inquiries.

"No, he isn't," said Judd, who lay on the grass with his hat over his face. "He's alone. I saw Samuel toddling off toward the 'stillery; guess he's down there."

"Won't you stay, uncle?" said Tom, as

the old man rose. Uncle Nebby shook his head.

“Poor boy, poor boy!” he said to himself, “that stillery is an awful place for a boy; and Sunday too, poor boy!” And so he closed the gate and set his face homeward. Then he thought, “It’s not far, maybe I can find him there and say a good word to him. Perhaps this is a turnin’ point, and powers of good and evil are fightin’ for the child.”

So saying, Uncle Nebby turned his course, passed along the plank walk, by the workmen’s houses, over the bridge, and into the distillery yard. The fires in the furnace were roaring, casting hot smoke into the sultry August air. There were fewer men busy than on week days, but work was going on, and now the roll of a barrel, and again the bawling of an oath, or the bursting out of loud laughter, met Uncle Nebby’s ears, as he walked slowly along the yard, searching for Samuel. A large barrel in his path seemed marked with blood; but bending nearer, he saw it was writing with red chalk. A little

further on, a great white door looked as if it had been scorched. Uncle Nebby could not see well without spectacles, but he found, on closer inspection, that there was charcoal writing on the door. There was no Samuel to be found, and the groping visitor passed into the brewery yard. He was trying, without his glasses, to make out a great scrawled picture and inscription on the whitewashed side of a shed, when the fall of a plank called his attention; and going toward the noise, he found Samuel sitting in the shade, on a pile of lumber.

“What are you doing here, my boy?” said the patriarch. “I went up to the house to find you, and then came here. I fear this is a bad place for you, the best of times, not to mention the Lord’s day. I thought, Samuel, you seemed lending an ear in the Lord’s house this morning.”

“See here, Uncle Neb. You’re just the man I want,” said Samuel. “Give us your hand, and I’ll fix you comfortable in a seat, and we can talk. There ain’t any men here

to-day ; they're at the 'still. Uncle, I came here to read what I got in Sunday-school. You know how Nurse Ross spoke to us. Why she made out we were murderin' here, souls and bodies, and I talked about it to my teacher to-day, and she gave me some books, and I concluded to come and read them just where they fitted, and see if they were true or lies,—and they're *true*. I ain't had my eyes open goin' on fifteen years for nothing. Here's 'Deacon Giles' Distillery,' and it tells what they make there. Listen, Uncle: Consumption, Delirium Tremens, Murder, Epilepsies, Insanity, Damnation and Hell Fire—all made at a distillery,—and its *true*, Uncle, and—aint it awful?"

"Awful, indeed, my poor boy. And the judgment of God will surely fall on all these places, and their owners."

"Then why aint people afraid to run 'em? My father believes in a God; why isn't he afraid to run a distillery?"

"Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, 'therefore the heart of

the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil,' ” replied Uncle Nebby.

“ But d'ye mind, sir, what the minister said this morning about the unjust who led others into evil, and the verse about it being better to have a millstone about your neck and drowned in the sea, than cause one of these little ones to offend? Why, who used to teach little Jem Waller to drink beer? And would Judd go on as he does if he had not been brought up here at a brewery? Why aint Waller and father afraid to go on with this?”

“ It says truly in the scripeter,” replied Uncle Nebby, speaking as much to himself as to the boy, “ that in the last days shall come ‘ scorfers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming, for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the foundation of the world.’ But indeed, my boy, that is a true word. ‘ The day of the Lord shall come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the

elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up.'"

"Uncle Nebby," said Samuel, "was it true that the church put father out because he kept up the brewery, and was going to open a distillery?"

"Yes, Sammy, I grieve to say, it is true. But, my boy, being in the church would not have helped him, if he did not work the works of God, nor have a heart right toward God. He had kept away from church for a long while. May God forgive him! And he knows he is sinning in this business."

"I should think so," cried Samuel, emphatically. "Well, uncle, it was all true about the distillery, every word; and I came over here to read the piece about the brewery. And it tells how the devil went and altered a distillery into a brewery, and told the owner that he was doing his work just as well as when he kept a distillery. They are all of a piece, uncle. I've been thinking it all out, all about the workmen and their houses and

families, and about Nurse Ross, and about Judd, and it's all one piece — and it's all wicked."

"Thank God you see it," said Uncle Nebby.

"And I'm going to get out of it," said Samuel. "If I stop in it I'll get just like Judd, and like the workmen. At home it's beer and whiskey on hand all the time. I'm going to get away from it. I say, Uncle Nebby, I don't know where to go. Can't I come stay with you and be a gardener? I'll work awful hard, and I'll mind every word you say. And I'll come up and see 'em at home sometimes, but I won't touch a drop. And by-and-by, uncle, you needn't do a bit of work, and I'll do it all. You needn't pay me a cent," added Samuel, magnanimously, "and father'll give me my clothes. I'll help you as much as Peters, and I want to be a gardener—that's honest."

"Be sure you shall come, my boy!" cried Uncle Nebby, reaching his arm about the boy's shoulder and giving him a squeeze;

“if your father allows it, come and welcome. I’ll be glad enough to have you.”

“He’s got to let me,” said Samuel, whom brewery associations had not endowed with reverence. “I’ll come to-night. I say, Uncle Neb, if you’re rested, it’s most supper time, and I’ll take you home, and then I’ll go tell father what I mean to do.”

Agnes had finished her afternoon sleep and was sitting on the porch when Samuel came home. Agnes was looking old; Fanny’s affliction, Judd’s lawlessness, the general disobedience of all her boys, Tom’s growing hardness, the sad thoughts aroused by Nurse Ross’s last illness, had plunged Agnes into a sea of troubles.

Samuel sat on the step before his parents.

“See here, I want to go and live with Uncle Nebby, and learn gardening. There’s too much beer and whiskey round here. I’m afraid I’ll take to it. Uncle Nebby says I may come, and I want to go to-night. If I stay here I’ll get to taking too much, like

Judd, and I don't want to have mother cryin' round about me."

"Tom," said Agnes, catching her breath, "if Samuel wants to go and live with Uncle Nebby, let him go; let us try to save one of our boys."

"Save — nonsense!" said Tom, with a frown. "You'll be tired of it in a week, youngster."

"No, I wont," said Samuel; "my mind's made up, and you know I always keep to what I say. Can't I go, father?"

"Yes, you can go, if you like," said Tom, carelessly.

"And can I have the trunk up in the garret, the one Uncle Nebby gave you, to pack my clothes in? Where's the key?"

"You can have it. The key's in the lock," said Tom.

"And can I pack it now, and have Judd help me down with it, to Uncle Nebby's, after dark?"

"If you like. But you'd better wait until to-morrow."

“No, sir! To-morrow I mean to get up at four o'clock and go to work. Say, father, you'll buy my clothes, won't you?”

“Surely,” said Tom, laughing.

“And every Saturday you must bring your soiled clothes up here for washing and mending,” said his mother.

“Pooh,” said Tom; “next Saturday he'll be back, to stay.”

“No, I won't,” said Samuel, firmly. “I'll never come back to stay;” and he bounded off to call Fanny to help him pack his trunk and to tell her the wonderful news, that he was going to live with Uncle Nebby. His brothers laughed at his notion; but helped him down to the gardener's with his trunk.

“Now, Uncle Nebby,” said Samuel, when his brothers were gone, “now I'm your boy, and I'll do just as you say.”

“There was one thing I forgot to say,” replied Uncle Nebby. “What about your schoolin'?”

Samuel's countenance fell. “I hate study,” he replied.

“Samuel, there’s almost nothin’ like eddication.”

“Poooh, uncle! Father had education, and taught school, and Mr. Waller had education, and see what they’re doing.”

“Good things may be set to bad uses,” said the patriarch, “but that don’t argy agin’ the good things, only agin those who use ’em amiss. No, Samuel, eddication is a good thing, and it’s in the line of God’s providence for you, seein’ you’ve got time, and a good school here at hand. My boy, you must go to school winters.”

“Oh, plague on it,” whined Samuel—“go to school, and I despise school; and go to college, and no end of plague.”

“I didn’t deal out a word about college,” said Uncle Nebby. “What I want is for you to go to school winters, till you can write a neat fist, and calcerlate briskly, and spell your words right, and deal out a chapter of reading handsome—and knows your geography.”

“Well, see here, uncle, if you’ll do the fair thing by me, letting me stay here, and learn

gardening, and go to market with the cart sometimes, why I'll do the fair thing by you and go to school two winters, and study like a brick."

"All right," said the gardener; "and if you do the fair thing by your schoolin', likely you'll know enough to go to market always with the cart."

After which compact Peters came in, Uncle Nebby had Samuel read a chapter, himself prayed, and the three went to bed.

Going to the distillery after his breakfast, next day, Tom found the men grouped in the yard, looking at a barrel, and a door; the open gate into the brewery yard, displayed a shed side, to which the men's glances were frequently directed.

"What's wrong?" cried Tom.

The men fell apart with an uneasy laugh. Tom saw the side of the barrel, written in red:

"A portion from the Lake of fire and brimstone;  
Inquire at Beck and Waller's Distillery."

He had never read the famous brochure from which it was drawn: and stunned and

amazed, he looked about, and his eye rested on the charcoaled door :

“Weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

“Inquire at Beck and Waller’s Distillery.”

More and more dismayed, he took a forward step, and saw upon the shed covering his beer barrels, a huge black demon, hoofed, tailed and horned, and out of its mouth running the legend :

“You are doing my work.”

While the artist, that no mistake might be made, had put beneath :

“This is the Devil ! !”

“Confound it,” roared Tom, finding speech, “who did that?”

No one answered. He moved nearer. “That looks like Samuel’s writing.”

“I saw him writin’ round here yesterday arternoon,” said one of the men, with a dubious laugh.

Tom was in a phrensy of rage. “The villain ! the reprobate ! the young dog ! I’ll thrash him within an inch of his life ! He

never got a flogging, but he'll get one now!" And he dashed after a heavy stick, lying in the yard corner.

Judd was standing on the top of a shed, and called out: "Hello, there! if you strike Sam with that, you'll kill him."

"Then I *will* kill him," foamed Tom. "Where is he? he deserves killing—where is the rascal!"

"See here," said Judd again: "if you thrash Sam, you'll have to go to Uncle Nebby's to do it. He's there."

"Then I *will* go there!" bawled Tom, stooping for his hat. "Clean that stuff off, some of you. Hah! He did that, and ran off to Uncle Nebby's, did he? That won't save him! I'll break every bone in his body." And he panted out of the gate.

The Beck boys had one virtue, that they always held together. Hiram was hiding behind the shed door. Judd looked down. "See here, Hi! You are suppler than father. You cut along by the back way to Uncle Nebby's, and warn Samuel off. You take

him out of sight somewhere for the day, before father gets there—or there'll be trouble to pay."

"All right!" said Hiram, scaling the fence, and in a moment his little lithe body was making fine time over the fields toward the gardener's.

Tom travelled along the path at a brisk rate, blind with rage. As he touched the bridge, a troop of spectres seemed to rise before him. How did it happen that, as if in plain light, came up that scene, Ray struggling from the water, with the limp corpse of little Jem Waller in his arms? Here, just where Tom's foot was pressing, they laid him down, and Jim Waller knelt in agony by his dead child. Tom drew back, then hurried on.

Here rose the figure of Nurse Ross, white-capped, stout, kind-eyed, cheery, as when she mended and made his clothes, when he was a child, and moving before him, as in the air, she changed to bloated, blear-eyed, mottled, unhappy, and then, a pale and coffined figure, drifted away. He was pass-

ing the workmen's houses, and ran against Dr. Kidder. "Pardon," blurted Tom.

"Stop!" I was just going to you. I must see you. One word, Mr. Beck!" said the doctor, grasping Tom's arm.

Tom always treated his townsmen civilly, and though his insane fury loathed delay, he paused.

"You know Ray's wife died last week. That was a most unfortunate celebration of the hands. I fear it killed her."

"Pshaw! she'd have died any how," cried Tom, angrily.

"Well, perhaps so: these fevers are dangerous things, and she had no nursing to speak of. Ray drinks so, he's always in beggary."

"I'm sure he don't pay for his whiskey," said Tom. "I've laid down the law often enough, but no use. The men will drink, and they don't pay for it. I lowered the wages some to account for what they took; but,"—

"When they're drunk they waste and

gamble away what they earn," said Dr. Kidder, soothingly; "but that isn't your fault. And that is not what I was speaking of. You know she left three children. Well, the baby, two weeks old, is dead. Come in here with me a minute." And the doctor pulled Tom toward the door of his workman's house. "Very good thing it died, too, for there was no one to look after it. There are not many like Nurse Ross, to rear other people's children."

Then out of the very heavens seemed to fall a cry Nurse Ross had made to Tom. "Your business has been the ruin of me and I fear it will be the ruin of your boys;" and bewildered by that cry, Tom suffered himself to be drawn within the door. There sat a neighbor woman, with the just dead babe on a pillow on her lap. The tiny white hands lay on the red blanket that had wrapped the little creature. The white face, fixed in death, was drawn and old. Tom felt as if in that dead babe's face were some fearful accusations against him. The words written

by Samuel had stirred up old associations, and he felt vaguely that this little dead face of the babe, motherless, and worse than fatherless by his means, would come out of its grave at the last day, and stand mutely accusing him before God.

“I’ve sent for Ray,” said the doctor; “but what can he do? He don’t rage when he’s drunk, but drink has turned him to stone. What did he care for his wife or for his poor children?”

The doctor dived into a corner and drew out two little girls, scared by the mystery of death. “This is what I wanted of you, Mr. Beck. These children must be taken care of; there is no one to do it. We need an alms-house here, with a children’s department, or an orphan asylum, or something. You are our leading man. Won’t you take it up? We must bestir ourselves for these two, right away. Will you look to it?”

“Yes, yes,” cried Tom, always ready to do something to compound with his conscience. “Yes, I’ll speak to Agnes, and to the Rich-

ardson's. You're right, doctor, we'll take the matter up; and here are five dollars for things here."

As he handed out the bank note, Ray came in stupidly.

"Ray, your child's gone," said the doctor.

"Yes," said Ray, dropping into a chair, and staring into the dead face, "yes, I see."

The doctor shook him by the shoulder. "Rouse up, Ray; don't you care? Why, man, this was your son, your first-born son; and a son should be a matter of pride to a man, and a beginning of better things."

"Son!" said Ray, "what's a son? What's any human, to grow up like I? Don't you 'spose, doctor, I'd been better to a died like that un? Ain't he better off than a fillin' his-self with raw whiskey, and things goin' to rack about him, and looked upon as a dog? Son! I wish all the sons were dead, an' me among 'em!"

Tom hurried out of the house. His fury against Samuel was gone. Indeed he had almost forgotten it, and its cause. He drop-

ped the big stick, and leaned dizzily on Ray's gate. In one terrible phantasmagora before his mental sight mingled drowned Jem Waller, and accusing Nurse Ross, and the dead mother of these children, and the white clay cold babe ; and around them and among them all moved that man Ray, dead in life, moaning an inarticulate pain, and over and in the whole shifting picture, the horrible words, 'The Lake of Fire'—'Damnation'—'The Devil's Work!'—'Weeping and Wailing, and Gnashing of Teeth.' Some one came near the gate. He moved aside mechanically ; he felt a presence strongly unlike his own ; sympathy, and calm, and readiness to help. The gracious look, the wise word, the generous act, went by, embodied. It was Mrs. Richardson, with a little parcel in her hand, come to do the last kindly offices for a drunkard's child.

Tom did not return to the distillery that day. Waller was in New York on business for the firm. Tom allowed the works to take care of themselves. He had a horror of returning until the impression of Samuel's

inscriptions were done away. However, he told himself that he was devoting his time to the public weal, and to works of charity—and he gathered some balm for his feelings from this internal statement. Travelling about on this business, he reached Uncle Nebby's, and then such a return of rage seized upon him, that if Samuel had been working beside Peters in the asparagus bed, his father probably would have administered to him a vigorous shaking. But Hiram, unconscious of the parental delays, had performed his mission; and having hastily confessed his deed to Uncle Nebby, and prudently possessed himself of a loaf of bread and a pie, Samuel, with his brother, had departed on a fishing expedition. Not seeing his son, Tom controlled himself, fixed his mind on the public weal, and bade good afternoon to Uncle Nebby.

“Uncle, I've been around all the morning talking up public business. We're going to have a town meeting this evening, and as

you are the oldest inhabitant, we want you to be sure and be there."

"What is it about?" asked the old gardener, not lifting himself from the bed over which he was stooping, for Uncle Nebby felt the stiffness of advanced age.

"About changing the county seat. It ought to be here, at Ryreson. We are more central; have better water power; more manufactures, and now we have the railroad. There are no decent buildings at B——, and it would be a cruel waste of county money to put new ones up there."

"Hum," said Uncle Nebby. "I don't care much for changing the county seat. Ryreson was good enough for me in the old times, better than it is now, by half."

"There's another reason for changing. We need some new institutions. This county has never had a poor house, only boarding two or three infirm, aged poor, at some farmer's. We need a good poor house, now, with insane ward, and children's ward. Doctor Kidder is very anxious about it.

Now, uncle, that's a *charity*, and if we had the county seat here, with the parson, and Mrs. Richardson, and the doctor, and some more of our good people to look after the poor house and the jail, our paupers and criminals would be well cared for, body and soul." Tom had not forgotten all his stock talk, used when he was—a Christian from his throat up.

"Hum," said Uncle Nebby. "Once we didn't have any paupers—once an orphan left destitute was a rarity, and five good people ready to adopt every one orphan. Once we had no insane folks—once we didn't need a poor house—once nobody ever got in jail from this whole township."

"Well, but uncle, you must expect these changes and disadvantages with increasing population—it's the way of the world—we get more populous and so more vicious."

"Tuts!" said Uncle Nebby; "a hundred and fifty years ago,—population, perhaps one white man, and *he* was decent. A hundred years ago, forty or eighty white men and

families, all decent. Fifty years ago the valley full of farms and folks — all decent — and *now*—cause is, not increased population, but it is the perversion of population by your brewery and distillery. More's the pity, Tom, more's the pity."

"Well, that's your hobby, uncle. The question now is, will you come to the meeting, to-night, and try and do something to help these poor and vicious, no matter how they became so?"

"I don't know whether I'll come or not," said Uncle Nebby.

Tom walked back by Hugh Richardson's. The meeting for the evening was to be in the dining-room of the "Pot and Pint." Waller was coming home on the evening train, and Tom had instructed Judd to meet him and send him to the gathering.

Hugh Richardson called to Tom not to go home, but to sit on his porch and talk matters over, and have tea with him. Squire Judd, a white-haired old man, who

was to preside at the meeting, was already sitting with Hugh.

“We must carry this thing through,” said Tom; “there is every reason why the county seat should come here. The railroad is reason enough; then we have a good academy, and we have a brick-yard and a lumber-mill to furnish materials for the buildings, and we are looking up in the way of manufactures. We have also fine water-power. If the change is made I will give my lot on the east side of Centre Street for the court house, and I’ll build myself a handsome house opposite it.”

“We must certainly bring the county seat here,” said Squire Judd; “there is no possible objection, is there, Hugh?”

“There is one in my mind,” said Richardson, frankly. “We are getting to be the drunkenest place in the county, and it seems to me a pity to bring young clerks, and young lawyers here, and a crowd of working-men, who will be tempted to drink, and who

will have so bad an example forever before their eyes."

"Come, come," said Squire Judd, who had invested nearly all his capital in the distillery, "there always will be more or less drinking around breweries and distilleries. We must accept the unpleasant fact as we find it; human nature is weak. But there must be breweries and distilleries."

"I do not see that there must," said Hugh.

"I'm surprised at you," said the squire; "they are a legalized part of trade and manufacture; their produce is much needed in medicine, and in art, and in social life, where sensible folks use without abusing it. They encourage production, maintain workmen, represent a large capital, return good interest on investments, and are a large source of income to the community."

"There I differ from you," said Richardson. "The manufacture of liquors brings no real increase to the state. It is spurious, as dropsy may make a man look fleshy, and fever healthfully florid. The money gained

in breweries and distilleries represents nothing of real value to the commonwealth. Trace it back, and you come to the men who paid it out as the price of their physical and financial ruin. Its last analysis is always a pauper and an invalid returned to the state, instead of a sound, thriving citizen, and *men* are the true wealth of a state. The man who developed that great industry, the manufacture of sugar out of beets, was a benefactor to the world, and worth a million of common citizens to his country in the long run. You take ten dollars' worth of beets, and convert them into a hundred dollars' worth of sugar—behold the glory of labor. You take five dollars' worth of iron, and when you have turned it into horse shoes, it is worth ten dollars and a half; make needles of it, and it is worth three hundred and thirty dollars; let it be manufactured into knife blades, and lo, it is of value three thousand two hundred and eighty-five dollars; while finally, if it becomes watch springs, it is worth two hundred and fifty thousand dollars."

“Iron,” said Tom, “is harder to come at than vegetable productions; it is also more indestructible, and is capable of wider uses, greater changes, and stands for higher values. But as for that, take two or three dollars’ worth of apples and you get fourteen dollars’ worth of whiskey; take eight or ten dollars’ worth of corn or rye, and you get some ninety dollars’ worth of whiskey, and these are wholesale prices. Twenty dollars’ worth of peaches, that else would rot on the trees, bring you a couple of hundred dollars’ worth of brandy; twenty dollars’ worth of blackberries, which would dry up ungathered on the hills, bring you, perhaps, four hundred dollars’ worth of brandy. There’s the glory of labor and manufacture for you.”

“But, what does this four hundred, or this one hundred represent in its uses? When it is consumed by the buyer, what is it? A family or two of entailed consumptive and nervous diseases; a decent property wasted; a fifty thousand dollar murder suit; half a dozen madmen or idiots for State sup-

port — a thirty thousand dollar arson; a dozen of paupers; a couple of lads in the house of refuge; a states prison offence or two, and tax after tax to maintain these things; and family inheritances wasted, and men disheartened by losing their property by fire, and a family or so orphaned.”

“And look at *your* side,” cried Tom. “Those knife blades have been used in suicide; they have been the instruments of a murder; they facilitated a theft; they maimed a man; a swindling price was charged for them, a tray of them was stolen, and a man got to jail—and as for your watch springs, some of them served for fine saws to cut jail bars, and let great criminals escape.”

“This is all folly, Tom,” said Richardson; “fancy a world minus knife blades, and without watch springs!”

“Well, and fancy a world without anything alcoholic!”

“*So I will*, and I shall see a world where harmless agents are used in arts, where diseases decrease daily, where a hearty and

happy population is the rule ; where labor is honored, and indolence despised ; where crime is dying out, where poorhouses, and prisons, and asylums, are being emptied—where nothing that was truly valuable is taken away, and what is valuable is being increased in value. Look at Ritter's farm ; he gets twenty loads of hay off his creek field, where his father only got ten. Ritter is a public benefactor. Look at Saul Wing. He has neglected his land while he has hung about the tavern, and his big meadow brought ten loads of hay less then it yielded fifteen years ago. Wing is a damage to the commonwealth. A barrel of beer costs you less than four dollars to produce, and the consumer pays for it twenty dollars. And consider that the more he drinks of it, the more he is likely to die of palsy or apoplexy. And you call your business a benefit to the community !”

“ We'll never agree about my business,” said Tom, uneasily ; “ but we must try and agree about a change of the county seat,

and the erection of the needed buildings.”

The county seat was changed to Ryreson, and at once the town broke into prodigious activity. Forty small houses were put up, pending the change, and into them poured workmen who expected to be employed in building a court house, a jail, and a poor house, besides houses for various people who followed the change of a county seat. Tom at once began to erect for himself an elegant mansion, and Waller modestly said he ‘would buy Tom’s present abode when he left it; it was good enough for a plain man like himself.’ Waller and Squire Judd got into their hands the charge of the erection of the new county buildings, that is of letting out the contracts and handling the money. Waller got the position and did all the business, and secured as associate for himself, to comfort the public mind, Squire Judd, who was unimpeachably honest. The squire was also old and easily led, and Waller had things all his own way. Tom finished his grand

house, sold his former abode to Waller, and took in payment certain of Waller's shares in the distillery. Waller, the long-headed, remarked that 'he was not a man of ready money, and it was easier for him to pay in that way.' Saul Wing said that he was getting too old to farm; farming had not paid with him of late. He would move to town, and would like to sell his farm to the county for the poor house. He privately promised 'Beck and Waller,' that he would put the proceeds of the sale into the distillery business. 'This firm managed to secure the purchase of the property for an almshouse. Saul's plans were somewhat changed by the death of his wife, from congestion of the lungs, during the moving; her disease being brought on by discouragement, sorrow and exertion. Saul having buried his wife handsomely, handed over his cash property to 'Beck and Waller,' for shares in their business, and went to board with Peters at the "Pint and Pot," where his favorite drinks would always be at hand.

Behold Ryreson, now! Tom's bubble is blown to its fullest. Here stands the new house, the splendid mansion toward which he had struggled for so many years; not now all paid for, unfortunately, but Tom says that 'two or three years more will set everything straight, and he wanted to build for all the rest of his life, if he built at all.' The court house is also completed; the homestead of Saul Wing has been turned into a poor-house, 'a model poor-house,' Tom says. The jail, a strong and handsome structure, surrounded with a mighty wall, is nearly finished; new streets are laid out, new houses and new stores are built, brick side-walks take the place of the old daisy-bordered foot-paths of Ryreson; a furniture factory is being erected on the creek, very close to the distillery. Among these piles of red brick, these roaring chimneys, these streets where drunken and disreputable people are no rarity, is a depot, with its trains whistling up twice a day, and its train of freight cars made up there several times a week. There is scarcely a trace left

of that calm country village whereunto years ago—thirty-eight years before this time which we are now depicting — the “Golden Fly” brought little Tom Beck, a sleepy, warm-faced boy, into Ryreson.





## CHAPTER X.

### AND THEN THE BUBBLE BURSTS.

“ For I have seen  
The bark that all the way across the sea  
Ran straight and speedy, perish at the last  
Even at the harbor’s mouth.”

*Dante.*



WALLER had become a well-established citizen of Ryreson. His civil manners, rattling talk, and shrewd business talent, made him somewhat popular, especially as in all the town there was but a small clique that in one way or another were unconnected with “ Beck and Waller’s Beer, and Beck and Waller’s Whiskey.” He had been greatly trusted in the matter of the public buildings, work on which was not yet

completed, nor had the accounts been rendered. Waller did most of the business for the firm outside of Ryreson. He purchased his house by lessening his shares in the distillery. But when he suddenly sold the house, furnished, to the county Judge, who wished to move into Ryreson, he did not put the price into the distillery again. No one knew the exact bargain. The truth was, Waller got full payment within a year, and put the money in a New York bank, while he told Tom that he had been obliged to use it to cover a bad speculation of his wife's brother, for whom he had endorsed. Waller and his wife went to the "Pint and Pot" to board, and it was generally understood that Waller was aiming at office and wished to be sent to the State Senate. Tom greatly favored this plan; it would give their house prominence. Waller could more than ever extend the business. The whiskey men needed some one to talk for them—their great interests could never be too fully represented. Tom was discussing this one evening on the court

house steps, where a number of towns people had gathered. "Waller," he said, "ought to be chosen as our representative; we deserve that much for what we have done for the town and for the county: we have been the making of Ryreson. Why, what a sleepy hole it was, and who ever thought of business here? We brought the railroad here by our business, and opened the way for these other factories; we have been great, and I may say disinterested benefactors of the entire county."

"See here, Beck," said Hugh Richardson, "I shall dispute that proposition. It is not so very disinterested to lay yourself out to get fifty per cent. on your money; even a selfish man would do that, with very little persuasion. Accounting for your capital invested, and the price of labor, you get fifty per cent. and call that self-sacrifice for the public good! If you only made two per cent. or no per cent., your trade could not be called disinterested effort for the good of the community, for it results not in good, but in damage.

You know, Beck, I have always claimed the privilege of frankly speaking my mind. I say, on every five dollars you liquor makers lay out in your trade, you make fifty per cent.; but by the time your wares reach the individual consumer, he pays, not fifty per cent. on this humanitarian investment, but a hundred per cent. or an hundred and fifty per cent.; possibly two hundred. Oh, this is beneficence indeed !”

“I can only point you to facts,” said Tom. “We have an immense laboring class in this country; whoever provides them labor at proper prices, is a friend to the laboring man. We liquor men employ an army of workers; we pay out fortunes in wages every year. If we closed our places, a host of poor fellows would be thrown beggared on the community.”

“I stand on statistics,” said Richardson. “I say that there is not a business in the country that really does so little for the laborer in a business or wages’ point of view, as yours. You pay about eight per cent. for labor;

other industries pay from fifteen to twenty-eight per cent., and the average struck is eighteen, within a small fraction.

Liquor men's workmen are, if you'll allow me to speak the truth, the worst housed, the worst fed, the worst in health, the worst moralled, the worst in expectations, and the worst paid, of any hired laborers living. The sudden closing of all you liquor men's establishments might at first throw a certain number of paupers on the public hands, but they are men bound to *come to us as paupers* sooner or later. Within a year from your simultaneous closing, the increase of paupers would have stopped; within three years, it would be perceptibly lessened; in ten years there would hardly be a pauper on the public hands; and the records of crime would show the same change. And as the old stock in our prisons served out their time, and went back into the world delivered from temptation—what brutes are we, praying to the Lord deliver us from temptation, and day and night tempting our brethren—and the life

convicts died off, our jails would stand almost empty. Imagine the boundless prosperity of a land where these immense sums, now exhausted by our pauper population, by our courts, and criminals, remained in the pockets of the citizens !”

“ You are imagining what can never be, simply because men are not angels,” said Tom.

The time had long passed when Tom had any conscience to writhe under Hugh’s well-directed and hearty rebukes.

“ I am imagining,” retorted Hugh, “ exactly what would happen, if governments saw and did their duty, and had a fatherly interest in the weakest of their people. If governments would make it criminal to make or to sell distilled or fermented liquors, the land would soon pass into a state of financial and moral rest. We should be sinners, and not angels still, but great crimes would be nearly unknown ; man’s better feelings would have opportunity to assert themselves ; we should not be dealing out decoctions of ‘ Kill Con-

science' and 'Drown Reason,' with their fatal consequences, as we do now; our sons would be in a fair way to grow up de——"

Hugh suddenly looked up, checked himself, and slipped out of sight in the group. Tom also looked up, winced, and slid behind a pillar. The eyes of these two men had caught the same object — Judd Beck, reeling into the door of his elegant home. And inside that home there was the usual scene. Agnes, thin, haggard, her hair lined with gray, her face wrinkled, meeting her eldest born, in tears. What comfort to Agnes was her fine house? Fanny, a delicate deformed creature, moved like a shadow through the handsome rooms. Judd, Agnes' first-born, on whom more and more the mother's heart seemed set, was a drunken, repenting, reforming, falling, unhappy youth. Samuel, ruddy, straight, hearty, joyous, was a grand contrast to his brother; but nothing would have persuaded Samuel to live at his father's house. He came several times a week to see his mother and sister, but at all other times, he was

working Uncle Nebby's place, and waiting on that patriarch, now well on in the nineties, and able to do no more work. Peters had gone to Utica to a florist's, on Uncle Nebby's recommendation, and Samuel flourished alone. Hiram was emphatically a bad boy, worse than Judd, in that he gloried in his sins with blatant tongue, and had no hours of sorrowing and repenting.

Jim Waller did not get his election. The public viewed the liquor benefaction in a different light from Tom, and elected Hugh Richardson. The day after this defeat, Tom came down late to his breakfast. Fanny and her mother were waiting for him. No one knew where Judd was, and Hiram was at the post office. It was nearly eleven o'clock. The breakfast had been three times cooked, and was now well burned; the servants were in a rage, and Agnes more despondent than usual. As the dismal meal proceeded, Hiram came in and threw a letter down by his father's plate. Tom started, looked curiously

at it, turned it, laid it down, and went on slowly eating, and regarding it.

"I say, dad!" bawled Hiram, "open that document. It's from Judd. What's up?"

Agnes gave a cry and leaned back in her chair. Fanny ran to clasp an arm about her mother's neck. Tom opened the letter and began to read, but it was too much even for his hardened heart. He soon paused, finished it in silence, laid it down and left the house for the distillery. Hiram would have taken possession next, but Fanny, with some decision, secured it and put it in her mother's hands. Thus ran the first and last letter that Judd Beck ever wrote his parents:

"DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER:

"When you get this I shall be gone. It is no use staying at home any longer. I'm only wicked and miserable there, and I'm sick of staying and making mother wretched. I'm sorry we have all been so unsatisfactory to her; but, oh, mother, why didn't you make a better stand for your children, and not let

father go into such a business? There's that in the prayer about 'lead us not into temptation,' but father's been leading us boys into temptation ever since I can remember. If he'd only gone into a cloth factory, as I've heard he was urged to, we might have grown up in his business and made decent men. What if the profits wouldn't have been so large—are profits worth more than sons? And what good getting together money for boys who don't know how to spend it, or keep it? It's all your fault, father, my ruin. But what is done, is done. Samuel saved himself by going away from home. I wish I had gone sooner—but I'm going now. It's my last chance. Father, I got money to go, out of your box in the office case. I took out the three hundred dollars that were there. I didn't ask for it, for I knew there would be a lot of fuss about my going, and I *must* go and get another chance of my life, away from this drink, or I shall cut my throat. You always said your money was made for us, and three hundred isn't much

for your oldest son. If I do well I'll pay it back ; if I don't you'll never hear from me more, and that money will stand as my share, from you. I did not mean to tell you where I was going—but I think of mother and of Fanny—and I will. I shall go to Chicago. The minister's youngest son is in business there, and George Richardson has gone in with him, and George used to know me when I was a little boy, so I hope they will give me work, and try and deliver me from evil. I need some one to help me, and I can't get that home—only temptation. I wish I was dead, or had never been born. Good-bye : don't write. I think even a letter from Ryreson would be like a hand dragging me back into my bad ways.

“ Your miserable son,

“ JUDD.

“ P. S. I got out the money because I had keys made that fitted the doors, and the box. The keys are up in my room, under the mattress. You'd better look after them.”

Fanny's eye, swifter than her mother's, had noticed the postscript, and caught Judd's thought. Hiram had better not have those keys. She ran up-stairs and secured them. Then she was hastening back to her mother, when she met Hiram and the cook carrying the insensible form of Agnes up the stairs. It was in vain to urge upon the distracted woman, that Judd might have gone out like the prodigal, to return—saved; that there was hope for her boy. Her first-born, on the verge of his manhood, had fled, and flung back to her an accusation of his ruin. Indeed there were few elements of comfort in her lot. Hiram bid fair to be worse than his brother. Judd had shown himself so weak in his efforts at reform, that the most likely future for him was to spend the three hundred which he had taken, in some final drunken brawl. Samuel said little, but he mourned over his brothers, for the boys were fond of each other, and his face indicated that he felt Judd's charges against a weak mother and a wicked father were just. And

what consolation was there in Tom? Tom had been the immediate cause of the family ruin, and Tom would not admit his errors, nor indeed feel them very deeply. Tom drank enough to make his heart hard, and the Beck nature was asserting itself more and more every year; and money, money, money, was the one dominant idea of Tom's life.

The old pastor came day after day to comfort this hapless Rachel, who mourned for her children, comfortless. The path of consolation that he showed was in penitence and prayer. Agnes' feeble nature, irritated by its accumulating woes, turned helplessly from spiritual things, and longed after the tangible.

Hugh Richardson brought her good news one day. George had written from Chicago of Judd's arrival, sickly, travel worn, and melancholy; and George had opened his doors to this stray from the old home, and had found him a niche to fill in his business, and sent words of cheer to the desolate mo-

ther, that he would strive to deliver her son from temptation.

Immediately Agnes and Fanny sent letter after letter to Judd. They were never answered, except through George Richardson, who said Judd would reply whenever he felt that he had fully cast the past behind his back and stood reformed. And would this time ever come? George Richardson wrote to his father of more than one relapse of his protege, when the poor fellow had vowed to give up all effort and rush to his death headlong; and George had dragged him back to his own house by main strength, and had thereafter succeeded in inspiring a little further moral force.

And so two years passed, and now the town patriarch, Uncle Nebby North, entered into his rest, going as a shock of corn fully ripe into the garners of his Lord.

Samuel and Fanny followed him as sincere mourners. Tom followed him as mourner *ex-officio*; and certain little facts in Tom's business of late, caused his mind at the

funeral to be mainly contemplative, not of the rewards of the heavenly inheritance, whereon the minister was ably discoursing, but of the probable market value of Uncle Nebby's house and acres, and the probable amount of his savings in the bank—and whether it could be possible that the old man had chosen any other heir than his grand nephew, Thomas Beck; and in event of such madness, Tom was in a state of mind to call his defunct uncle, “an old fool;” and, moreover, Tom was willing, if he should prove able, to sell out the market garden right away; careless of the fact, that there, free from temptation, his second son was making an honest living, and a man of himself. Thus around the placid sleep of death, around the intense quiet of coffins, surge the seas and billows of human unrest and sin.

Agnes was not at the funeral; she had not left her house since Judd left it; and as from her upper window she watched the funeral train sweeping along, all the town following reverentially the honored sire, she wearily

wished that the coffin held her broken heart and tired frame.

In the evening, after the funeral, Squire Judd, Samuel and Hugh Richardson went to Tom Beck's.

"Your Uncle Nebby," said the squire, "left a will, and I have brought it around to read to you. I drew it up for him several years ago, and Mr. Richardson is his executor."

Tom looked up a little surprised; *he* meant to be his uncle's executor. The will was short and simple. It devised all the old man's property for Fanny's use, and after her death it was to pass to the Bible Society.

"And how much is this property?" asked Tom, coldly.

"Four thousand dollars in bank, his house and lot."

"It's a mere trifle," said Tom. "I don't see what Fanny wants of it. I've plenty for her—but I suppose it is right that she should have it."

"I'm quite rich," said Fanny. "Nurse

Ross left me a thousand, too, and that's in your hands, also, Mr. Richardson."

"Yes," said Tom, testily; "and your money isn't bringing you anything to speak of, the way it is invested. It ought to be bringing you ten or fifteen per cent., and it would if it was put in any reasonable business. If you do the fair thing by Fanny, Richardson, you would put her capital into my business, where it would bring her a decent little sum every year."

"I should not dare to venture any of my own money in your business, Tom," said Hugh, "and I should be doubly careful about putting there money of which I am only a trustee; and, besides, I really think Fanny would prefer a small income from almost any other source, to a larger one from the liquor business. How is that, Fanny?"

"It is really so," replied Fanny, in a low voice.

"Well, it makes no difference," said Tom; "my business is a large one, and it is hardly worth my while to be bothered with small

shares in it, and I would not, except for my own family."

"Well, Fanny," whispered Samuel to his sister, "do you mean to turn me out?"

"Oh, Samuel," said Fanny, "I don't see why Uncle Nebby did not leave it all to you; but if it is mine, you can go on using it just the same. I wonder if I could go and keep house for you? But, no, I could not leave poor mother. Will you board here?"

"Never," said Samuel. "I'll get some nice fellow to help me with the place, and we'll have an old woman come in every morning, and cook and clean up for us. I'll pay you rent, Fan, what Mr. Richardson says is right; but, since Uncle Nebby got so old he has let the house and the fences run down, and you ought to mend them up."

"I'll tell you, Sam," said Fanny, "I don't want rent from you, and I've a right to take as little rent as I choose, or none. Suppose I let you do the repairs for the rent, or as much repairs as you ought, and I'll put the rest on out of my interest money."

“You’d better,” said Sam, “save the interest to buy that two-acre lot back of the garden, to add to it. It is an elegant bit of land for gardening.”

Fanny thought a minute. “Sam, I’ll do the repairs out of the interest, and you need not pay me any rent, but you make all you can out of your work, and buy those two acres for yourself. Perhaps by-and-by you can get a large place for yourself. And, if you are buying land, perhaps father will give you some money to help you.”

“I don’t want any of his whiskey money,” said Samuel; “and, besides, Fan, between you and me, I think after a few years there will be precious little whiskey money to divide. I’m a little suspicious about Waller, and that place up there is a perfect tinder-box, and a lot of howling, drunken demons disporting in it.”

“They are very careful, and have watchmen every night.”

“Well, they can’t save what the Lord pur-

poses to destroy," said Samuel, "and I truly believe a curse rests on that place."

And so Uncle Nebby's long life had ended, and his slow, honest earnings had passed into younger hands, and were likely to be used just as he would have desired. But, while some fruits of the field are garnered fully ripe, while flowers are reaped in their beauty along with the ruddy grain, there are fruits that fall before their prime, penetrated with an early and pitiful decay. Thus, while godliness had been to Uncle Nebby a preservative of his life, a lengthener of his years, retaining his strength and faculties unto extreme old age, Judd Beck, in his early manhood, was a painful wreck, doomed to an early death. Again and again had he striven, and fallen, and repented, and been led by George Richardson's tender compulsion into renewed efforts at reform; and in his last effort there was a certain grandeur of patience and resolution, and a determination to die rather than offend. But, with a constitution undermined by early excesses, his mind

distracted by remorse, appetite, shame, and determination to reform, Judd was ready to become a prey to disease. A malarial fever was sweeping through the city, and he fell ill. The course of the disease was short with him. One letter told his friends that he was ill, the next that he was dead. He sent a warning to Hiram to amend his ways, bade George Richardson tell his parents that he forgave them, and said he hoped his mother would find some comfort in Samuel and Fanny. But Agnes had fixed her maternal love, not on Benjamin, but on Reuben. She had only to utter the old-time cry, "All these things are against me;" and, "if I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved." She now kept within her room, her hands folded in despair in her lap, slipping silently "the downward way to death."

Into her ear fell the voice of the preacher. "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead; be watchful and strengthen the things that remain and are ready to die."

"But, what do you think of my poor boy," she asked, "my boy, who said we ruined him—is he safe?"

"There was in Judd's life," replied the pastor, "much of striving against sin, and much repenting. These things are not natural products of the human heart, they are the fruits of the Spirit. None who ever came to Christ have been cast out, and it seems to me that God has answered his cries for help, not according to our thoughts, but to his own thoughts, and has set him in a better life, where all things are made new."

"Then, possibly," said Agnes, "if I might reach that land, I should see him again, and we could begin the story of our lives over again, and I could see that by God's mercy I had not been allowed to ruin him forever."

And this thought seemed to stay with her, as she sat day after day with her Bible or Pilgrim's Progress on her knee; and who can tell what were the experiences of that feeble and sorrow-stricken mind, or what prayers had been harvested in heaven for

answer in her behalf. But, so she sat, and read, and mused, and seldom spoke, and in silence drifted out of life, as one who falls on sleep.

And warned by these visitations upon his house, did Tom repent, and do his first works? No, he went into a new spasm of proving that all he had done was right and for the public good. He added to the brewery, increased the size of his saw-mill, and gave it steam power; extended his distillery, brewery, and lumber yard, so that they touched the small depot yard; he also laid a short piece of track connecting with the depot platform and running through his yard, to save himself the use of horses and wagons in getting his goods on the freight cars. He took Hiram into partnership, and strove to limit the youth's drinking, and yet drank enough himself to keep his brain in a state of continued excitement. And this pressure upon his mind was aggravated by the fact that his business perplexed him. During the war the firm of "Beck and Waller" had

made an immense amount of money. Their buildings, additions and improvements had cost them very heavily ; they had also lost largely in several speculations ; yet their expenses and losses were not enough to account for a certain stringency in their money matters which Tom felt, rather than could explain. The money made in his evil business seemed melting like snow wreaths, and the cause was beyond his reach. Tom had never been taught book-keeping ; he had studied it a little by himself, but Waller, who had a fatal facility for business, had kept the books of the firm, and had attended to their work outside of Ryreson. Tom now began laboriously and secretly to examine his books, for a number of years back. He had not lost faith in his partner. He suspected him of nothing, but he wanted to know affairs for himself. While Tom was puzzling over the inscrutable legends inscribed on his account books, the county had begun to clamor for accounts and settlements in regard to their public buildings. The work of finishing had

dragged on amazingly, and the work of settling accounts dragged more wonderfully still. Squire Judd had reached that period of placid age where time slips by unnoticed, and all affairs drift in shadowy unreality before the mind. He had implicit confidence in Waller. He did not realize how time had fled. It was some while before he woke up to the fact that he must settle with the public as to its business. But the honest old gentleman woke up at last. "I may drop off any day, and I want to stand square with my fellow-men. These accounts must be audited. You, Waller, have all the receipts."

"Yes," said Waller, "and I am getting all in order as fast as I can. My own affairs have pressed me. Next week, squire, I shall be ready, as soon as I get back from the city, where I must go to make a sale, and to collect a heavy bill for our firm."



## CHAPTER XI.

### TONGUES OF FLAME.

“Turn, turn, my wheel! ’Tis nature’s plan  
The child should grow into the man,  
The man grow wrinkled, old and gray;  
In youth the heart exults and sings,  
The pulses leap, the feet have wings;  
In age the cricket chirps, and brings,  
The harvest home of day.”



AND so,” cried Mistress Peters, greeting Tom at Hugh Richardson’s gate at twilight; “I’ve lost my best boarders for a long while to come!”

“Eh, who—how is that?” said Tom.

“Why, the Wallers. Off this morning.”

“Yes,” said Tom, “I know Waller’s off on our business, but he will return in three days, and his wife nearly as soon. She only went to see her sick brother.”

"Yes, so she said. But let me tell you, when folks go to see sick brothers, they don't usually take every blessed rag they own with 'em. Three great trunks, for a few days' visit to sick brothers! And such a packing of nights, and pretending not during days. It looks curious to me."

"Pshaw!" said Tom; "then I suppose Mrs. Waller hopes to stay for an autumn visit after her brother recovers, and so said nothing, to avoid being catechized. It is a way we have in small towns, Mrs. Peters."

Mrs. Peters passed into the house. Hugh and Tom stood by the gate.

"So, you didn't know they were going?"

"O yes, I did. Waller was with me last night. They left on the morning train. They may have had other news after he left me, that changed Mrs. Waller's plans. Jim has gone to secure a big contract for us, and to collect a large bill that will be paid tomorrow. He must be home by Thursday, to settle along with the squire."

Tom raised his hat, said he had business

at home, bade 'good-night,' and disappeared in the darkness. Richardson mused a while, then made up his mind, and followed Tom. He went up the steps of Beck's house just after its master had closed the door; but Tom hearing the ring, turned. "Why, Richardson, is it you? Come in!"

They stood together on the step. "Tom," said Hugh, "I feel uneasy about that partner of yours. Are you sure of him? How far are you trusting him? Can you not have that bill paid to *you*?"

Tom laughed. "Why, Waller's all right. And how can I, as one partner, stop a bill being paid to the other partner, who has always handled our money? Thank you for your interest, Richardson, but Waller will turn up all right, I am sure."

"I hope so. I have no one great thing to base an adverse opinion upon. I have been rendered anxious by little things."

"No doubt Jim could explain them all," said Tom, uneasily.

"I hope so, but look well after your own business, Tom."

And now it was Richardson that said good-night, and disappeared in the darkness. Tom retired to his library and to those troublesome books. After an hour he came to the stair foot and bawled, "Hiram!"

"Well, boss!" bellowed Hiram from above, and a crash announced the kicking off of a boot.

"Do you know anything about book-keeping?"

"No, I don't."

"Confound it! You went to school long enough, or had the chance."

"I never took to learnin', boss," retorted Hiram, kicking off his second boot.

"Fanny!" cried Tom, and from the sitting-room came Fanny, a little pale cripple, her hair of ruddy gold, like her father's, in his youth, falling over her shoulders, and partly concealing her deformity, as she looked up into her father's face, with her mother's eyes. Tom's voice and countenance always softened when directed to his daughter.

"Fanny, can you keep books, or don't they teach girls such things?"

"They never taught me, father," said Fanny. Then, seeing her father look anxious, she added: "Do you need some one to help you? There is the book-keeper in the new dry goods' store, or Mr. Richardson."

"O, I can't be dragging my private affairs out before strangers. I want the work done in the family."

"Ah! now I have it," cried Fanny. "Samuel can keep books. He took lessons all last winter of the master that had a Commercial Class here, and they said Sam was the best in the class. I'll send for him."

So Fanny wrote a card to her brother, woke the little servant boy out of his first sleep, and before long Samuel, with his clearer head, was working in the library over those problems which had puzzled his father. They toiled until three o'clock; Tom producing papers and answering questions, and finding his faith in Waller oozing rapidly away.

“Father,” said Tom, “take my advice and try and stop that money—three thousand, you said—being paid to Waller.”

“How can I?” asked Tom, helplessly.

“Why, send a dispatch to them not to pay it at all this week. They’ll jump at the chance of keeping their money a few days more. I can take a dispatch over to the telegraph office, and wait for an answer.”

But Tom had the usual vacillation of drunken brains. He went to the dining-room and fortified himself with a glass of whiskey, came back with renewed courage, and thought it “hardly worth while—things were not so bad as that.”

Samuel took a nap of two hours, and at five awoke his father and returned to his work. Fanny, who knew they had been up all night, came in at six with hot coffee and a plate of sandwiches. At eight Tom’s mind changed again. “Sam, take a fast horse, ride over to the telegraph office, and stop that payment. Get an answer.”

Samuel was off in haste. At noon in he came, crest-fallen, the answer in his hand.

“Paid. To Mr. James Waller.”

“I’m afraid it’s gone after a good deal more,” said Samuel, despondently.

Tom opened his sideboard, and got out liquor and glasses, and began to re-invigorate himself, with all the fatuity proper to one who had virtually drank up three thousand dollars a few hours before. Samuel went into the sitting-room. His father came to the door. “Where are you, Samuel? Come back; no time to give up now, I need you. We must get through this, and see where we are.”

“I can’t come back while that stuff is on your table,” said Samuel, quietly. “I have made a vow never to go where it is. I cannot trust myself as luckier folk can. You know, as boys, we had it often, and, for all I know, the seeds of ruin are in me, needing only a little drenching with whiskey, to bring them into fruit.”

“Well, come on!” roared Tom, beside

himself with whiskey, anxiety, and rage against Waller; and dashing back to his table he took up the tray with three glasses and two bottles, and flung it bodily through the plate glass window. Fanny stood aghast.

"Never mind," whispered Samuel; "that wreck will air the room, and the action has relieved his mind."

Again at work. Two o'clock now. Dinner is ready.

"We must eat if we work," said Samuel. "Come, father;" but in the door way they meet Hugh Richardson and Squire Judd.

"A word with you, Mr. Beck. Where is Waller? We must have him at once. Two large bills have been handed in which he had assured us were paid, and the receipts in his possession. And would you tell us if you know anything about this note of your firm, given to the contractor for the work at the poor house? And we want Mr. Waller's papers. He said they were at his rooms, and he would produce them on his return; but Mrs. Peters says he has left absolutely

*nothing* there. Possibly they are in the safe at your office, or in his desk there. Would you find them for us?"

Tom dropped feebly into a chair.

"I know nothing about a note of the kind you mention. I never wanted the county business mixed up with our concerns. Hiram, take these gentlemen to our office and let them look for Waller's papers. You help them. Gentlemen, something is wrong."

"Wrong!" cried Squire Judd, his voice tremulous from age. "I think so, Tom. I've trusted that man too far, and my gray hairs are to be dishonored by his defalcations, that I should have prevented."

"Come, come, squire, not so bad, not so bad," said Hugh, fearing the effects of this excitement.

"See," said Samuel, "let us dispatch to the chief of police in New York to arrest Waller. He was in the city this morning, and had three thousand dollars of firm money paid to him. I'll go and dispatch."

The telegraph office was six miles away.

“Go,” said Richardson; “the squire and myself will take the responsibility. Squire, you are our leading magistrate here; shall we have Waller arrested?”

“Yes, yes!” cried the squire, “tell them to detain him.”

Off went Samuel, Fanny running to hand him a couple of buttered rolls. Richardson, Tom and the squire were searching for Waller’s receipts and accounts, which were as apocryphal as his “wife’s brother.” When Samuel, waiting at the telegraph office, after a dispatch or two, got this news: “Mr. and Mrs. Waller sailed for Europe, per steamer, at eleven to-day.”

Evidently the worst had been done. Samuel was desperate. He responded: “Send a dispatch and have them arrested on the other side.”

And now, as Waller in *propria persona* appears before us no more, we make excuses to tell of his “tricks and manners,” and of his fate; things part of which came to Ryreson’s knowledge very soon,

and part not until three years after, when Waller was shot in a gambling-house in Mexico, by a man whom he had cheated in what he called a business transaction. Waller had for some time been putting to his own private account in places where he could lay hold on them at a moment's warning, sums large and small, which he had taken from the firm and from the county. To these he had added the price of the property which he sold, so that with his last collection he had got away with about sixty thousand dollars. He had taken passage on the steamship for Liverpool, gone on board with his baggage and wife, got his room key and entered the state room. Man and wife had also privately slipped off the ship. The state room was broken open on the first morning out, and found to be empty. The two modest trunks were opened by the officers at Liverpool, and found to contain rubbish. Meanwhile Waller and lady returned to their hotel, and told the clerk that a colored man with a wagon, who would

bring a certain marked card which Waller exhibited, would call for their luggage. The worthy couple walked away, entered a disreputable colored den, and came out transformed by paint, wigs and padding, into a tidy colored couple. The host of the den had a covered wagon at the door. All entered it. The trunks were put on at the hotel, the tidy elderly couple sitting unmoved in front. The wagon moving again, Waller whipped the cloth covers off his trunks and put them inside, put labels with *Christopher Williams—New Orleans*, on the trunks, and thus beautifully concealed, departed for New Orleans, and thence to Mexico, as fast as steam by land or water could convey them. The story came out by degrees, after Waller was dead.

But in what condition were affairs left behind him? Squire Judd was financially ruined. The honest old man gave up every copper of his property to satisfy the county, as far as possible, for the swindle which his oversight had rendered possible. The squire

was not rich, and his property did not go very far in the adjustment. People pitied the old man, and a small office was given him, on which, with help from his son-in-law, he with his aged wife managed to subsist. Tom's business had received a sad shock. Debts of which he knew nothing, cropped out. Still, his was a business that brought him large returns, and he thought that if no other disasters came upon him he could weather the storm. He wanted Samuel for his book-keeper, but Samuel told him he dared have nothing to do with the liquor business. He also wanted to get the use of Fanny's five thousand, but this Richardson firmly refused. The whole business of Ryre-son suffered in the defalcation of Waller. He had large debts, with the Peters, father and son, and he had secured several thousands belonging to silly people, for spurious stock in Tom's distillery. The bad morals of the place were also telling on its prosperity, and in the country round, the town had an evil reputation. Hugh Richardson

used this depression, and Tom's perplexities, as a final argument with him for leaving his business, and turning the brewery and distillery into some kind of factory.

"I should lose enormously," said Tom, "and I'm poor enough."

"You might lose for a time, but I fear if you keep on with this, you'll lose more and more, surely. Suppose you *do* spend a great deal in the change, you have most likely years enough to recover yourself; you are but fifty. You might by a change reform Hiram. Samuel, who is a real bright, business fellow, let me tell you, would go into partnership with you. I have some funds to invest in a decent factory, and I could command more in the city. If these works stopped, many of your workmen who will do nothing else than stay in distilleries, would move away and relieve us of a bad population. We should have less liquor in town. I think I could prevail on Peters to turn the 'Pint and Pot' into a temperance house—get our old 'Sheaf of Wheat' again! We

might increase temperance interest here, close up a grog-shop or two, and by-and-by, with the help of a set of sober laborers which could be brought in for the new enterprises, we might make Ryreson a decently temperate place."

"Yes, and all at my expense, by making a poor man out of me," said Tom, sulkily.

"Not at all. In the long run you would be richer; and is it nothing to save your children?"

"I can't change," cried Tom. "I must sink or swim in this business."

"Then, I'm afraid you'll *sink*," said Hugh, turning on his heel. Tom looked older than Hugh, despite Hugh's seniority. Tom was grizzled, bleary-eyed, stooping, thin and wrinkled; Hugh erect, lively, ruddy, his eyes keen, his white hairs a crown of glory.

As he left Tom, this life-long friend said sadly to himself, "Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone." Tom Beck had worshipped other gods than the one God, and they had blinded his eyes and hardened his

heart. Let him alone. Fanny often pleads with him to leave his evil business, even if he leaves it stripped to his last dollar ; but no, let him alone. Samuel pleads with him —‘give it all up’—let him alone. That sight of drunken Hiram ought to be a plea to a father’s heart, but it is not to his. Perhaps he has no heart, now, and no “divinity in his bosom.” Let him alone. How will all his life look ; all his selfish, stubborn, avaricious, dogged course look, lit by the terrible lightning of the last great day ? Let him alone. But there are days of judgment in this lower world, and within the limits of time, red first-fruits of the wrath to come ; and such a day blazed forth, to show the anger of God against men who are destroyers of their fellows, and to light with a lurid glare the whole track of Tom’s perverted life. And it was meet indeed that the hand which he should have guided to lay hold on righteousness, but had filled instead with the cup of doom, should carry the brand

to light this wide-spread ruin. Our sins are their own avengers.

Hiram's partnership in his father's business was merely nominal. The firm of Beck and Waller was broken up, and the sign over the numerous gates and buildings on the business premises, was Beck & Co. There had been a tacit agreement that Hiram was to be given a share in the business, and on his part he was to reform. He did not reform, but grew worse if anything, and Tom allowed very little money to get into his hands. Hiram's vicious habits were expensive; he wanted to be away from his duty for days at a time, tearing about the country with a fast horse, and a companion of his own style. When he was drunk he gambled and quarrelled; lost, lent and gave away his money; when he was sober he devoted his energies to getting more money. Coming to a crisis in his pecuniary affairs, Hiram resolved one March night to help himself from a safe that stood in his father's office, and where he thought he might find a hundred or two

dollars in bills. The first step was to get rid of the night watchman. Tom had lessened the number of his workmen, and there were now no hands in the buildings at night. Tom and the foreman left between nine and ten, with a couple of hands; then the night watch began his rounds, and at half-past four half-a-dozen men came to work, and the watch went home. Hiram's plan was to go to the distillery towards eleven o'clock, pretend that he had some business, have the watchman in the building with him, ply him well with liquor, then close the doors and go home. At twelve he would return, and be likely to find the watchman asleep on a pile of lumber, recommended by himself as a place sheltered from the wind, and commanding a general view of the establishment. Relieved of observation, Hiram could help himself to the money. If his father ever found out where it went, he would be likely to keep the matter from publicity, and it might be a lesson to him to give Hiram funds more freely.

Hiram carried out his programme carefully, except, that as he was obliged to drink with his watchman, he himself was more intoxicated than he had expected to be, when he, returning at half-past twelve, found the derelict guard snoring on the lumber. Forcing open the safe, he secured his money, put things, as he supposed, in order, and left the office, quite forgetting the lamp which he had set down beside the door that led into the principal ware-room, stored now with barrels of liquor, which were to go next day to market. In his half-drunken meanderings about the office, Hiram had displaced a long, light board, that was leaning against the wall, near his door of exit, so that now the corner interfered with closing the door. He gave it an angry kick and locked the door, giving no heed to the fact that the board fell as he did so. Hiding in his pocket the stolen money, he hurried home. Meanwhile the plank fell upon the kerosene lamp, breaking and upsetting it. In a few moments the pine door, and frame and flooring,

aided by a saturation of oil, were burning rapidly. The wooden shutters were closed, and the fire was out of sight. The burning door fell finally from its hinges, scattering burning wood along another pine floor and among dozens of barrels of liquor.

The well-fed fire roared up against the window frames, and dusty rafters, and light floorings overhead, and now devoured the shutters, and poured broad and red into the night, revealing the office and the ware-room a mass of flame. And now the alarm was given. Some one saw the direful scene, and shrieked, "Fire! fire! fire!" The workmen leaped from their beds—a messenger dashed through the village, crying, "Help—fire—the still!"

The awful cry started Tom and Hiram from their sleep. They tore open their windows only to see the night sky hanging red over creek and pasture, and a mighty column of smoke and flame rising above the brewery and distillery. They rushed madly to the scene of disaster. All Ryreson was at the

fatal spot. The one fire engine was there ; all the buckets and ropes and ladders were there, but what were they against this monster demon, this terrific, overmastering presence, this smoke Afrite, forever expanding now that he was loosed—this Cerberus and Briareus united, which had an hundred mighty heads, and bellowing, unsatisfiable mouths ; an hundred red, furious, tearing, destroying hands ! On, on, it raced, and roared, devouring wood, and bricks, roofs, floors and foundations, buildings and contents ; this Logi that in the city of Jatunheim in the bitter Northland, in the halls of Utgard-Loki, eats up the meat, the bones and the trough wherein they lie. Fire, fire, fire ! The bells ring, the country people come hurrying from their farms, the workmen's wives empty, as far as possible, their houses, threatened with ruin by the dropping cinders ; the cattle in the meadows bawl with fear under a sky whence all the stars seem falling. The fences are torn down uselessly ; the fire licks up the debris, and rushes on its ruinous

way. The brewery is wrapped in a great shroud of flame; the lumber-yard sends up red columns that seem to touch the sky; the mad element mocks at the puny defiance and opposition of man. Red shingles and boards whirl through the air and hiss into the creek. Now a great pall of blackness closes over all; now a crash, an uplifting of the smoke, a new lighting up of the beacons of destruction. Yon innocent furniture factory has stood by a bad neighbor, and is dragged down in his wreck. Useless to fight for it—the flame pours from doors and windows, and from roof and side. Write a man ruined, and pass on. Cry louder, ‘Fire, fire!’ Rack your brains for new inventions to fight the foe. The saw-mill is a prey now. It lights and burns as when a child flings into some glowing grate a box of matches. The crowd gaze aghast. Now there is a deep drawn breath—now a loud cry as the smoke rolls up more densely, or there is a wilder burst of flame. They rush and hurry helplessly on every hand. Nothing can be done here,

because it is out of human power to catch up these buildings and carry them away from this furnace.

Well is it that Miller Ryreson has been this many years in his grave. It would have broken his heart to see the destruction of the ancestral mill, where his father and his grandfather worked before him. But the mill will go now, the saw-mill is so near; and now of that remains but a glowing and blackened mass, heaped tumultuously about the great black skeleton of the steam machinery. And now indeed the flouring-mill is a prey; doors, and windows, and floors, and roofing. A thick pall of smoke rolls up, when the wheat and the flour, the corn and the rye, that might have filled so many hungry mouths, are all eaten up by Logi, wicked demon of flame!

But the crowd have been busy about the depot, for thitherward the flames have rolled. The depot and its adjacent buildings will go like the rest. But the cars, and the engine, that are there to make up the next morning's

train, freight and passenger, must be taken out of danger. Ryreson is the termination of the line, but there is an eighth of a mile of siding running up the valley behind the fire. To take the cars forward on the track would be ruin, for it would carry them beside that terrible wall of flame. The cars are coupled, and as the turning-table lies close under the blazing distillery yard, they are backed up the siding to what is thought to be safety. The engineer and brakemen stay nigh at hand, but not on the engine.

It has taken some time to attend to this, and now, despite hearty efforts to save it, the depot roof is catching the blaze, and here and there tongues of greedy flame shoot out of the platform, and are hurriedly extinguished. The yards are a sea of flame; the fire feeding on the barrels and casks of liquor, rolls and tumbles its billows like a school of monsters at play. Where is Tom Beck, while the struggle and hope of his life is ending thus in charred rubbish, in red embers; all his toil, all his accumulations, his

boasts, his prospects, gone, tried in this fearful crucible, and found to be dross, all dross? When he reached the disastrous scene, it was too late to rescue anything from the office, and all efforts to save his terrible stock in hand were futile, for the high board fence had caught fire, and wherever the barrels were rolled the tempest of flame pursued them, and dragged them in.

Tom was frantic; he tore hither and thither; he toiled, imprecated, shouted, besought, worked heroically and uselessly, and at last, burned and exhausted, was carried from the spot to the parsonage, for the time unconscious of his losses and his pains. Hugh Richardson, as he surveyed the centre of conflict, having at last convinced himself that all efforts were futile, saw from the roof of a workman's cottage on which he was standing 'to fight the fire,' the whole extent of the disaster—and swiftly his mind darted back to the time, forty-five years before, when he had entered Ryreson with Tom Beck asleep between his knees.

There was the wide, low-lying pasture, now not in sunset light, but in baleful fire-light, red as if drenched in blood—there ran the creek blood-red between red banks; the very trees seemed dyed in gore; the winding turnpike had a bloody hue; that very tree, which on that long-gone evening Jean Clerc had pointed at as '*petite*' and '*jolie*' beside the road, and possibly a future fire-brand, which long ago had grown up, and withered, and dried, had now caught fire, and was waving like a great signal of disaster against the sky. Along with the roaring of flames, the crash of buildings, the shouts of men, rose to Hugh's ears a piercing cry, the wailing of little children, terrified at the unwonted spectacle; of women crying because their means of support were gone.

Meantime, Hiram, who was nearly as distracted as his father at the utter ruin of their fortunes, had been drinking freely. Some of the men had rolled a barrel of whiskey beyond the reach of the flames, and had opened it, "to refresh" the toilers of the

night ; among these Hiram had drunk often, and the liquor had in the first place illuminated him as to the cause of the disaster. He began to bellow his own shame.

“This is my fire ! I set this on fire—it was that lamp I had in the boss’ office. Upset the thing—and whack ! up it blazes as if it was lit by demons. Ho, there ! I know, now ; this still has been built over the mouth of hell, and hell’s burst up here, in earnest. Don’t try to stop it ! No use, boys, no use. Firebrands from the pit, Satan lit ’em—let ’em burn !”

As he yelled in this insensate fashion, brandishing over his head a smoking fragment, his father, who had recovered from his insensibility and rushed madly back to the scene of his ruin, came up behind him. He saw the distracted youth whirling the brand, gesticulating, threatening, proclaiming his own share in the frightful event. The sight appalled him.

“Take him away !” he shouted ; “carry

him off—he's mad!" and he dashed to grasp Hiram about the waist.

"Yes, boss, I did it, I did it! Just my luck! Can't stop it now; floored you, hasn't it! Hooray! But, I'll save something, I'll save—" He looked around frantically. A new light gleamed in his eyes; he was near to the train which had been run up on the siding reaching toward the parsonage, and near which spot the few rescued whiskey barrels had been placed. Hiram's glance fell on the train. He hurled his father from him, and Tom fell prostrate. The engineer and brakesman, who, attracted by Hiram's loudly shouted confessions, had drawn farther and farther from their train, ran to lift the fallen man, and examine into his injuries. Hiram, quick as thought, darted behind them, leaped upon the engine, pulled the throttle valve wide open, and in another moment the train, consisting of one passenger and four freight cars, was off, flying down the track. The switch at the siding had not been changed. The track lay under the

high, burning and tottering wall of the distillery. In the hindmost freight car was a barrel of kerosene that had come up that day for use at the depot. The new horror of the spectators rose up in a deafening cry, as they saw the train crashing toward the hot centre of the fire, the crazy Hiram its sole engineer, mounted in full sight, waving his blazing brand. The train thundered under the flaming walls, and they fell with a crash, scattering hundreds of firebrands over the last cars. In a few moments they were in a blaze. And now was presented a most awful vision. The track lay for three or four miles straight down the valley; and in sight of the assembled multitude, that blazing comet with its red train whirled along the level way, Hiram standing on the engine, his back turned to the mass of flame, which the outward motion of the cars drove from him, his arm holding aloft a brand scattering fiery showers, his face set toward his own doom, a very genius of destruction. On, on, on! in breathless speed—on, on, on,

pursued far behind by a crowd who follow to overtake the final disaster. On! on! on! to the sharp curve, at last, where the engine, like an infuriated steed, leaps from the track, and falls a total wreck, the burning fragments of the cars heaped in ruin around it; and under broken iron and charred wood, a mangled corpse, which but now was this crazy engineer!

It is the last act in the horrible drama. The sun rises red and lowering in a smoky sky. Along the creek and turnpike a great mass of rubbish marks the busy works of yesterday. The old flour-mill lifts its gray walls, blackened now with smoke and flame; some millstones and fallen iron lie in the midst. The saw-mill shows its stone foundation, and the gaunt, twisted skeleton of its steam machinery (yet unpaid for), a great boiler, red and gnawed by fire, and some fallen saws. Fences, and warehouse, and depot, and furniture factory, brewery and distillery, all are gone. Hot ashes, red cinders, a few crumbled bricks, fallen stones,

and heaps of fallen iron—the flames have eaten up everything else. Old Saul Wing, wringing his hands and moaning “beggared ! beggared,” is one of those who hang vampire-like in the gray morning over the scene of desolation. Tom lies in a brain fever at the parsonage. The people of Ryreson are facing the facts that what they called their *prosperity* has perished in a night, and that morning has dawned on many a family of paupers.





## CHAPTER XII.

### ONLY ASHES.

“ Stop, stop, my wheel ! Too soon, too soon  
The noon will be the afternoon,  
Too soon to-day be yesterday :  
Behind us in our path we cast  
The broken potsherds of the Past,  
And all are ground to dust at last,  
And trodden into clay !”



It is midsummer now, just such a midsummer as that in which little Tom Beck came in the “Golden Fly,” asleep, to the scene of his life failure. In this Arcadian valley he grew up under safest influences ; here were woven in gracious harmonies the idyls of his youth ; here it was prophesied that he should be “the making” of the pretty village of Ryre-

son—here he made the fatal choice of evil rather than good, and took Mammon for his master, rather than God. Here, on a small scale, has been worked out that question in political economy, ‘Is the liquor business compatible with the prosperity of the State?’ Ryreson, as a town, and Ryreson in its individuals, has practically answered the questions, whether the liquor business is productive, non-productive, or destructive; whether its products increase human comfort and happiness, and whether the county was not forty dollars poorer for every twenty dollars Tom was richer?

How stands Ryreson, now? Tom has sold all his property by the creek, but as it was merely land, nefariously heaped with rubbish, the price had on it was small. A nephew of old Miller Ryreson, who had heired the money fairly made, bought the old mill, and has restored it, and rebuilt the bridge over the creek. The furniture factory has been rebuilt on a small scale. The depot re-appears in the shape of a single

platform ; the Railroad Company have discovered that the Ryreson branch was pretty much of a failure. They lost heavily in the fire. There has been but little trade or freighting, since "Beck & Co." stopped working, and Ryreson people, who expected to get rich on railroad dividends, are realizing the truth that lies hidden in the fable of "a maiden carrying on her head a pail of milk."

The workmen's houses are now more than half untenanted. When they found that "Beck & Co." could not rebuild, some moved away, one or two ran away, leaving helpless families, who were shortly after conveyed to the poor-house ; one or two hung about the tavern as miserable sots, until for misdemeanors they were lodged in jail, and their families also went to the poor-house. The county, heavily robbed by Jim Waller, finds itself miserably taxed, and overburdened ; its debts, its criminals and its paupers weigh it down, and a long vista of debts and paupers stretches into the future. Peters,

junior, had invested all that he possessed in the brewery ; his shop has been sold out at sheriff's sale, and he has returned, a poor, idle toper, to his father's tavern.

At the time of the fire, Saul Wing, once a prosperous farmer, was in debt to Peters, senior, for half a year's board and liquor, at the "Pint and Pot." The fire destroyed his ability to pay anything, and old Saul has returned to the house which he built in his young manhood, and to the acres where once he throve so well—returned now a beggar on the county's hands.

The desolation hanging around the row of workmen's houses, where the grass and weeds wave over the door stones, and the naughty village boys have pelted out the windows, seems to creep like a plague through the whole village. The windows are pelted out of one of the shops where a flourishing whiskey business was lately conducted ; a grocery store, in which a man from abroad had rashly invested, is also open only to pelting. The growth of Ryreson has

been sudden and spurious, like the upcoming of enormous fungi, which we find in summer in forests after long rains, and heavy, heated days; huge, thick shields, painted in lurid orange and red, shrivelling and dropping to a spoonful of moist dust. Most of the money brought into Ryreson had represented no fair equivalent; the house had been built on sand.

Tom, the manufacturer, sold to the wholesale dealer, and the wholesale dealer to the retail man, and he in turn to the individual customer; and it went down this wretch's throat, and produced no value of money in muscle or morals, in brawn or brain, in energy or invention; all the results were on the losing side. The mysterious XX representing the money that went to the dealers, went down the drunkard's gaping mouth, not a legal equivalent for money, and then its minus results began. The man was of less value to himself, of less value to his family, of less value to the State than he had been before he paid his money out for Tom's pro-

ductions. The whole story is like the Hindoo fable of the world resting on the head of a snake, and the snake on the back of a tortoise, and the tortoise—on nothing.

After the fire, and the burial of poor Hiram, Tom lay some days ill at the parsonage, tended by Fanny and Samuel; then he was removed to his own house; and still carefully waited on by his children, he lay now in stupor, now in delirium. Hugh Richardson, who as a friend had given faithful but unavailing wounds, now displayed his friendship by endeavoring to save for Tom something from the wreck of his fortune. All "Beck & Co.'s" papers had perished in the flames. After the disaster bills poured in on every hand, many of which Fanny and Samuel were sure had been paid either by their father or by "Beck and Waller."

A few weeks after the fire, Tom's health improved greatly, and he was for a few days able to give some attention to his business. He had agreed to the sale of the old Ryre-

son property, which returned to the family of the first owners. He also empowered Hugh Richardson and Samuel to settle his business for him. It was quite impossible to conceal from him that his financial ruin was complete ; indeed he foresaw it as soon as he had found how much the flames had destroyed. Hour after hour this knowledge pressed upon his mind, gnawing as a canker ; beyond what family, friends, or physician could guess, he brooded over his misfortunes, rehearsed his own warnings and follies ; retraced the path of Waller's base deceptions, trod in fancy the shining path of ' what might have been ' if he had accepted better counsels, and then fell back upon the present of disgrace and beggary. His brain was in a turmoil, trembling on the brink of madness. Day after day, amid all this soul conflict, he had looked for his son Hiram, not daring to ask for him ; perhaps he was sick, crippled, disfigured by the fire ; perhaps he was away on business—perhaps he was dead. A strange silence concerning him had fallen on the household.

At last suspense grew intolerable. When Fanny was attending on him in his room, he said abruptly, "Fanny, where is your brother Hiram?"

Fanny was arranging the counterpane at the foot of her father's bed. She trembled, bent lower, and clasped the bedstead for support;—the awful horror of Hiram's death overwhelmed her.

"Fanny!" cried her father, impatiently.

"He has gone, father," murmured Fanny.

"When will he be home?" demanded Tom.

There was no answer. Fanny was trying to calm herself, to find words to tell the truth to the sick man.

"Fanny, has anything happened to Hiram?"

"Yes, father, our poor Hiram is gone—he is dead."

"And when—when did he die—how?"

"Dear father, he was killed, on the night of the fire."

Tom was silent a long time. At last he

spoke, still to Fanny, who had gone to the window, and was looking out to hide the tears that streamed over her face.

“Fanny, there were five of you, once. There was your little sister. She died one summer. Doctor Kidder laid it to the mash fed to our cows. She was a lovely child. There was Judd, our first child; how proud we were of him; all the world seemed to centre in that boy, for us. Well, Judd went wrong, and he was very unhappy, poor boy, and he ran away from home, and died young, and it broke your mother’s heart, Fanny. Ah, I never thought it would come to that, when here at Squire Judd’s, I married Agnes Murtry, and she was such a fresh young girl. And then, there was Hiram, always a strong, active, saucy boy—quite beyond control—and he was killed. Ah, what a sudden death for one so young! And you, my poor Fanny, you have suffered too, from that fall; you never could be strong and enjoy yourself like other girls. I remember an old story, something about a man who

brought a serpent home and nourished it, and it destroyed him and his children. Uncle Nebby told me long ago that my business was a curse to others and would be a curse to me ; that I was digging pitfalls and would fall therein ; that my ways were of the violent dealing that should ‘come down on my own pate.’ What have I done !”

He rose in his bed on one arm, gesticulating violently with the other ; his face flushed. His voice took a high, sharp key :

“What have I done. I have had my own way ! I have trampled gratitude to my foster father under foot. I sold my conscience, my church membership, my wife, my children, myself, to the devil—and, what has he paid me ? what ! A heap of ashes ! *a heap of ashes !* A HEAP OF ASHES ! Nothing more !”

He fell back panting. Fanny hurried to him.

“Dear father, be calm ; don’t go on in this way ; God is merciful. He will forgive you

if you go to Him. It is not too late, dear father, for Him to help you."

Tom glared at her wildly, buried his face in the pillow, and again and again came forth the gasping cry, "Ashes—ashes—ashes!" Fanny forced him to take his composing draught, bathed his head, darkened the room, and finally he fell asleep.

Fanny had dismissed all the servants but a young girl who understood nothing of cooking for the sick. That evening, Samuel being busy with Mr. Richardson, Fanny went to prepare her father's supper. Mrs. Peters met her in the hall, and said she was going up to sit with Tom until Fanny came.

"Don't speak to him unless he speaks to you, please," said the young girl. "He has been very excited, and unless he keeps quiet he may have a relapse." But she herself had no idea of her parent's critical state, or she would only have left him with some person like Mrs. Richardson, and not with the garrulous Mrs. Peters.

Tom, when Mrs. Peters entered, seemed

composed, and interested in ordinary topics. He asked after several neighbors. This was the craft of incipient madness, resolved to get from this long-tongued woman what others mercifully hid from him. Finally, he said :

“Mrs. Peters—you were at—at the fire.”

His evident effort did not warn her. She replied, briskly :

“Indeed, I was. The most terrible sight ever I wish to see. Thousands of dollars licked up like drops of water. Ah, to see it go—what folk had been toiling for, for years—such screams, such flames, such terror ; ah, says I, to Peters, ‘It’s the strongest kind of a sermon on the bad place that ever I wish to hear.’ And, Peters, he said—”

“Mrs. Peters,” interrupted Tom, gasping, “did you—did you see—my son Hiram’s death?”

What is so unmerciful, so unreasonable, so utterly cruel and brainless, as a gossip? On rushed the stream of Mrs. Peters’ talk.

“See it! Oh you may say so — such a

thing as I never wish to see again. Says I to Peters, 'It's well his father didn't see *that*.' I've heard of people riding lightening; I thought I see it then; that line of blazing cars, rushing like a streak o' lightening down this blessed valley, and *him* mounted on the engine, waving fire over his head. Oh, if ever Satan was let free and loose in this world, it was in Ryreson that night! And, as I said, Hiram jumps on that train like mad, and whirls over the country, till down by Milton's curve the whole burning thing jumps the track, and Hiram under the wreck. It's one blessing, I reckon, he never knew what killed him. Could a hardly known his body, folks said, only there was no other living thing aboard that burning train.—But I declare to gracious, Mr. Beck, likely I oughtn't to talk like this. Fanny said you must be quiet."

Only a pair of wild sunken eyes glared at her for answer. Before morning Tom's brain fever was back again, and again days and days were spent between mad ravings

and inarticulate moanings. Week after week, and still there was only a fevered madman in Tom's room, and Samuel and Hugh Richardson toiled at the settlement of the estate as best they could.

"The house must go, and all that is in it," said Hugh, "except those things that have been given to Fanny, and the little silver with the Murtry stamp on it. If your father ever recovers, he may be able to do something for himself; and if he does not, there will be a few hundreds which may be saved to take care of him with."

"I can take care of him," said Samuel. "Fanny has her house, and her five thousand, and I can work. We can all live at the cottage — it is in good order."

"We can furnish it very neatly, from things that were your mother's, Nurse Ross', or Fanny's," said Hugh; "and as it will be less expensive for you there than in this large house, after cold weather comes, you had better move there in September, even if we do not sell the house by that time."

“The house will never bring its worth,” said Samuel. “It is too large for any one who wishes to come to Ryreson, and there is no one here who wants to buy it, or can pay the value of the place. Ryreson is ruined; our minister was speaking of it to-day, when he came to see us. He said he never saw such sudden growth, and such sudden and utter decay; it reminded him of old Saul Wing, whom he saw at the poor-house when he went there yesterday. Saul, fifty years ago an industrious young farmer, and owner of a handsome place, just of age, full of hope, prosperous, innocent, simple-minded — Saul, ten years ago a portly old man, calling himself too rich to work, living on his income; idle, drinking, gossiping — Saul to-day, a drunken pauper, in a poor-house; his own early home, left him by his father, turned into a poor-house, and he a pauper! That is a sample of Ryreson’s long-ago industrious prosperity, and of Ryreson’s recent money inflation, and bad morals, and Ryreson’s present ruin.”

“It was the ripening of decay,” said Richardson; “the worm in the heart that gives a false softness and bloom, that cover only rottenness. Ryreson is an example of a whole country leaving sobriety, industry, and the honest gains of honest work, money that represents a real value; and puffed into an intoxication of falsely called good times, made out of war, whiskey, shoddy, and speculation; the higher it rises, the lower it falls; the better it seems, the worse it will really be; the wider the expansion, the greater the irretrievable ruin. You, Samuel, cannot remember Ryreson as I remember it. Not a debt, not a pauper, not a criminal, not a sheriff’s sale, not a man without something in the bank; a general intelligence, and morality and good feeling in the community; a broad capacity for solid improvement; and as for healthfulness, hardly an accident, no hereditary diseases, no epidemics.

“With the advancement of the country in educational advantages, Ryreson would have reached a better education for its sons and

daughters. As railroads spread over the country, and commerce and manufactures improved, Ryreson could have had its share. We have good water-power; there was nothing to hinder our having cloth or paper-mills, or any other legitimate industry. Suppose this county, at that time almost free from liquor; this township, then quite free from it, had resolutely opposed the manufacture or sale of any kind of intoxicating drinks. Your father's energies and means would have been driven into legitimate channels; sharks and sharpers from abroad would not have come here to prey on us. Crows follow carrion; and as the scripture says, 'Wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together.' The money of Saul Wing and of Squire Judd, instead of being lost, would have been well invested, and they would now be two thriving, honorable citizens, instead of one living narrowly on a small office, the other a pauper. As a township, we should have saved ourselves an influx of ruffians and beggars; we

should have saved ourselves high taxes, a heavy debt, and very great losses. Property here has lost twenty per cent. in value ; it would have gained twenty per cent. And this would have been done not by 'restraining the liberty of the individual,' as our demagogues rant about doing, but by hindering the individual from selfishly interfering with the greatest good of the greatest number ; restraining him simply from preying on his neighbors, from filling his own pockets with money obtained without a proper equivalent being returned. The State, Samuel, which licences liquor-makers and dealers, finds its type in your poor father, who, permitting this liquor in his family on the pretext that moderate use was lawful, that its making was profitable, that its ruinous use was not his fault, and that all moral creatures should choose freely for themselves, has accomplished the ruin of his family—their financial ruin ; the death of three, the physical ruin of one ; and if you alone have escaped unharmed, it was the especial care of Providence exerted

in unusual channels, and not thanks to your father's parental wisdom and care. The natural method of Providence for saving and building up families, is through good and wise parents ; the natural method of making happy, thriving and moral citizens, is through the wise laws and the beneficent foresight and control of the State. The State is a poor parent indeed, that offers to every child a razor to cut his throat, or a glass of poison to madden him. The State wants men, good men, good citizens ; and to obtain these, licenses the making and selling of agents that will produce criminals, invalids, and paupers ! If a man does grow up to be a useful citizen, it is no thanks to the State. True, the State does a great deal for him ; provides schools for his education, protects him in the exercise of his religion, protects family ties, and renders by law his life and property safe. But, *per contra*, the State nullifies these good deeds where the school is set up on one corner, and a grog-shop school of vice is legalized on the next corner ;

religion is protected, and demoniacal tempters pay so much per head for liberty to lure men to ruin; law environs the family, and law protects the villain who beguiles the husband and son from duty and kindness and allegiance. Law sets a hedge about life and property, and licenses the selling of the fatal cup that creates robbers and murderers, and peaceable citizens are butchered in street cars, and in their own homes, and at church doors. The waste occasioned by liquor, which is made and sold by government license, would pay our national debt. If we could turn our whole country as a unit against the sale of intoxicating liquors, we should, in the numbers, vigor, wealth, and mental and moral power of our citizens, become the wonder of the world—the first power in the world. Of such a grand national advancement, are we deprived by insane legislation.”

“Well,” said Samuel, “in Vineland we have the exhibition of a town built up by temperance, and in poor Ryreson the spectacle of a town pulled down by intemperance.”

“Consider, also,” added Hugh, “that ten years of whiskey legislation would ruin Vineland, and fifty years of temperance legislation will not root out the evils that have fixed themselves in Ryreson; the disease, the wrong moral bent. So much easier is it to do ill than good. It is like the story of Humpty Dumpty on the wall, ‘all the king’s horses and all the king’s men’ cannot put him right, when once he has tumbled down.”

Such talks as these Samuel and his old friend Hugh Richardson often had when they were at their hopeless work of trying to make Tom seem less than ruined. And so the summer passed by; and in September the little high-roofed, vine-beautified cottage which had sheltered Uncle Nebby’s blameless life, was furnished for the moving in of Samuel and Fanny; and it happened that they moved in just one hundred years from the day when the cottage had been finished, as said a carved inscription on one of the stones over the door. When Samuel and

Fanny had moved into this little home their chairs and bedsteads and other furniture, they moved their father in also, like a piece of furniture, for he came without either volition or understanding of his own. Whatever knowledge or information of any sort that had crept into Tom's mind, since March, had been of a torturing kind. All consciousness had been painful consciousness. Tom had voluntarily cast away his faith, that might have been "an anchor to the soul, sure and steadfast;" he had chosen evil rather than good; he had joined himself to his idols, and when trouble came these idols had been wanting to their worshipper. Tom had also, by long, though not excessive drinking, taken the tone and elasticity from his mind; he had no recuperative power, and sank down into a state between idiocy and insanity.

Hugh Richardson, who fifty years before, a self-constituted guardian, had brought him to Ryreson, acted as his guardian still. Samuel and Fanny wanted to keep their parent with them, attend to all his wants,

and hoped to win his mind back to soundness. Mere idiocy they might have managed, but Tom's mental aberrations proved of a malign type. When, in the course of a year, he had recovered physical strength, he grew dangerous. Samuel could master him by main force, but Samuel and his hired man must needs be out about the place at work, and it was not safe to leave poor Fanny with her father; he frightened her by springing and screaming, or throwing things at her; he tried to strangle and to smother her, and explained himself as thinking the cottage 'a poor, plain place for her whom the angels wanted'—that 'he heard her mother calling her, and wanted to send her to her;' adding very indefinitely, that 'he owed Agnes something, and he wanted to make it up to her;' also, 'he hadn't treated Agnes and the rest of them just right, and he thought if little Fanny, who was a peacemaker, and always said a good word for him, could get there, she'd make it all right, before he saw 'em.'

“There is no use, Samuel, trying to keep him here,” said Hugh, as he marked the crazy leer and cunning of the father’s eye, after he had rambled on in this fashion of talk. “He will kill Fanny. Now we know that he always loved the girl deeply, and was very tender to her; his whole natural disposition would have revolted from harming a hair of her head. We have no right, for Fanny’s sake, to keep him here, and it is no kindness to him to leave him where he may commit a crime. We must put him under restraint”—

“Where?” said Samuel, knowing well where.

“At the county poor-house, in the insane ward. They will take very good care of him, and between us, we can have him visited two or three times a week; you can also take him any comforts that you choose, in food or furniture. He must be moved there at once.”

And so they consented to it—but there were bitter tears on Fanny’s part; and Hugh thought how Tom had advocated building

this poor house, and providing an insane ward, little dreaming that one day he would come there himself as an inmate. But was it not just? Tom's business had made many paupers—and here was he a pauper—his business had made many insane, and now he was insane. It was a legitimate business in the law's eye. He paid his revenue taxes, and the law had not interfered with him in his business. No—this vengeance was not of human law—this was that eternal Nemesis that meddles with the affairs of men.



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