

Literature, &c.

Temperance Advocate.

THE DRUNKARD'S WIFE.

Twenty-seven years ago; and I was not what I am now. My eye was then bright; my cheek was the picture of health; and my heart was light and blithsome. I was then a stranger to care. I had never experienced one pang of disappointment from hope deferred. The world was to me full of promise; and my imagination looked forward to many future years of calm and tranquil happiness.

Twenty-seven years. How often does my memory carry me back to that green sunny spot of my existence. Twenty-seven years ago! There is a meaning in these words which brings to my mind a full recollection of that sweet and delightful period. Well do I remember the delicacy with which I was reared; the unwearied pains taken by my indulgent father to give me an education answerable to my birth and prospects. And well do I remember my numerous suitors—my happy bridal eve—my splendid dress—and my brilliant wedding—when I gave my hand and my heart to him who is now my husband.

I was then a delighted, happy wife. My husband was one of the most promising and intelligent young men in the village. He was to me so kind and attentive—so full of affection and tenderness. I loved him then; I love him still; and I trust I shall love him until I die. Our prospects then were the most encouraging. Well do I remember the beautiful mansion which my father gave me, and splendid furniture with which it was stored. The costly sideboard, with the glittering vases and glasses which covered it; and the elegant decanters, sparkling so brilliantly with the choice wines contained in them. Oh that wine, that wine, how like the serpent it stole into the Eden of our bliss, and stamped a curse on me and mine, unutterable and indescribable. But I was then young and thoughtless. I poured out the wine for my young companions as they called upon me. I laughingly urged those who were temperate to take only one glass! Like a fool, I was sporting with the very temptation, the most fatal to the peace and happiness of families. Experience—bitter, sad experience—has taught me this; and the agony of heart and the tears of anguish I have shed for this, my youthful folly, can only be seen at the judgment.

One year after my marriage, I gave birth to my first born, a fair and beautiful boy. Oh, how many hours of happiness—pure and unalloyed—have I spent in sporting with and nursing that young immortal. How fondly was my heart attached to that child, and yet how little did I then feel for his true interest; how little gratitude did I feel to my Maker, for his goodness towards me, and how little obligation to teach my son, in his early and tender years, his duty to God. I was then blinded with my sins; I had experienced and enjoyed too many mercies to feel grateful for them; and it was only when misfortune came, and laid its iron hand upon me, that I was led by the infinite grace and mercy of God to think of my obligations and duties.

Well, time rolled on. Another, and another, and another were added to my family; and nine years after my marriage, I was the mother of five children, all of them boys. My husband had, by his attention to business, secured a handsome fortune; and our worldly prospects were most encouraging. He was to me still kindly affectionate—all that a husband should be. I was still a happy wife, and a gratified, delighted mother; no cloud seemed resting over me. But why need I dwell upon this fair side of the picture longer? My tale is a tale of woe—of blighted hope, and my appeal is the last painful appeal of a wife's and mother's heart. Read it and hear me through, ye rum-selling gentry. Ye are they who make sport of the happiness and peace of many a domestic circle: ye are they who, for the sake of gain, are ready to destroy both body and soul; ye are they who are scattering flowers over hell; and smoothing the pathway of many a wretched wanderer towards it. Do I talk too hard? Oh, read a little further, and see the havoc one of your number has produced in my family, and then say, if you can, that I have no reason for my severity.

I will remember one bitter cold night in December, that I sat up long after my usual hour, waiting for my husband to return from his business. This was the first time he had ever staid out so late as to alarm me. There I sat in my chair: all alone, anxiously waiting the sound of every footstep upon the pavement. One,

two, three o'clock was sounded by the faithful monitor before me. Still he came not; tired and cold, I laid myself down upon my pillow, not to sleep, but to wet it with my tears. My heart was oppressed with a certain feeling that all was not right with my husband. About four o'clock, I heard several hurrying steps upon the pavement, and strange loud voices, as if engaged in angry debate. The crowd stopped at my door; I heard my husband's voice demanding admission. I descended to the door and opened it. He looked at me sternly for a moment, but observing my pale countenance, still wet with tears, he changed colour, and stammered out an apology for keeping me up so late, and ascended to our chamber. Before retiring to bed, however, he went to the sideboard to drink a glass of wine. The decanters were empty; he opened the sideboard, and looked for the jug containing brandy. This was empty also. This surprised me, I knew that both had been filled a few days before. My eyes were now opened, and the astounding fact that my husband had become a drunkard and had just returned from a drunken revel, burst upon me. I covered my face with my hands, and burying them in the pillow, tried to shut out the frightful idea. Oh God! what an hour of agony—was that. The husband of my bosom—the beloved of my heart—the father of my children—prostituting his intellect and debasing his character by intemperance. Could it be? He arose the next morning long after his usual hour. Breakfast had been delayed for him; and the eldest children whispered together as he entered the room, as though they were shocked at his altered appearance. Before he sat down to the table, one of the boys was sent to a certain rum-selling professor, in our neighbourhood, after some brandy. I knew he had always drank a glass before breakfast, but it had never attracted my attention particularly before. I now determined to remonstrate with him—gently, but firmly—and induce him, by a kind moral influence, to abandon so pernicious a habit. As soon as the breakfast table was cleared, I entered the parlor and desired him to follow me. He entered with a cheerfulness which gladdened me; and closing the door, seated himself on the sofa beside me. I took his hand gently between mine, and looking him up in the face, with as much tenderness as I could assume, I began to speak of our first acquaintance—of our early love—of our marriage—and the bright prospects which were then opened before us. I spoke of our present standing and influence in society—of the high respect with which we were treated by all; and then I brought the question home to his heart, whether he was not fearful that all these fine prospects might be ruined, if he continued to indulge his appetite for ardent spirits. He listened to me attentively, and answered smilingly, when I had finished, 'that a glass of wine or brandy, now and then, could do him no hurt. He was not fearful of becoming a slave to habit; he could break off when it hurt him; I might make myself easy about him, for he understood his own interest too well ever to become a toper.'

This was eighteen years ago. No Temperance Societies had then been formed; and public opinion was not so much enlightened as it is now. I knew it was fashionable to keep all kinds of ardent spirits in the house, to treat every caller; and our station in society was such; that our house was often thronged with visitors. I knew that we should be derided if we banished liquors from the house; and yet, so thoroughly was I convinced that my husband was a ruined man, unless it was done, that I determined to make the attempt. I proposed it to him; he looked at me with surprise. 'No, no,' he exclaimed, 'that shall never be; our less wealthy neighbours afford it, and so must we; I cannot, and will not, consent to that. One glass of wine cannot do any one any possible hurt, I shall drink one whenever I want it.' 'I agree with you, my dear husband, that one glass of wine can do no hurt. It is not of one glass I complain. I have noticed of late, that you drink many in the course of a day. The habit has grown upon you with fearful rapidity, and I do fear'—and a tear started—'I do fear the consequence.' 'Poh, poh, nonsense,' he replied good naturedly, 'it is all imagination.' 'Imagination or not, my dear husband, it has affected me as much as though it were a painful reality. It was but yesterday I saw our two eldest boys around the sideboard looking wistfully at the wine; and, will you believe it, our little Will got hold of some, and had to go to bed before four o'clock, so tipsy he could not stand.' 'The sideboard must then, be locked,' coolly rejoined my husband, 'it will not do to be so unfashion-

able as to turn our liquor out of doors. Our parson keeps it, and so do our deacons, and so do our professors of religion; and surely, if such men as these think there is no harm in it, we may safely allow it to remain.'

What could I say? Alas! it was too true that our parson kept; and often have I, when I have visited his house, accepted of a glass of wine, or some other stimulating drink. Our parson, also used to drink it before his breakfast, and before he went into his pulpit on the Sabbath. One of our deacons also kept it for sale; and several members of our church had their drunkard manufactories in full operation. Alas! I did not then dare to question the piety of these men, and after my husband had quoted such high authority, I felt constrained to be silent.

Well, a few weeks more rolled away, before my husband again stayed out after his usual hour. When he came home this time, he was considerably intoxicated. He pushed me roughly aside, as he entered the house, unmindful of my fast falling tears. My nights and days became now embittered with a certain fearful looking for of sorrow. My cheeks became pale, and mine eyes red with weeping.

For about five years after this my husband frequently came home intoxicated. In vain I reasoned and remonstrated I treated him with all the tenderness of which I was capable, did all that I could to anticipate his wants, and make his fireside cheerful and agreeable; and yet, for it all, I was frequently repaid with harsh and brutal abuse. When sober, he was kind and affectionate, and would make every promise in the world to amend. He seemed deeply conscious of the injury he had done me. Still the enemy was allowed a fortress on our sideboard; and still my husband thought there could be no harm in occasionally dallying with him. Alas! the habit was fixed—deeply, incurably fixed. He had become a slave to his passions. He could no longer resist the temptation. The net was thrown, the victim was caught; and all the prayers and agonizing supplications of a wife, and all the tears of five shamed and wretched children, could not set the captive free.

Well, two more years passed away of deep and indescribable wretchedness. Every thing went wrong. My children, who were at first shocked at their father's disgrace, now, in turn, began to ridicule him. His business was neglected, and the first intimation that I received of the bad state of affairs, was an execution levied by one of our rum-selling professors upon his store. I immediately gave a mortgage on my house, to release my husband's effects in trade. He promised amendment. I believed him, and placed in his hands all the property which my deceased father had settled upon me. This however, was soon sacrificed like the rest, and sixteen years after my marriage, I found myself a wretched outcast upon the world, with no place that I could call my own in which to lay my head.

Well do I remember a cold and bitter morning in January, 1822: my husband had been absent all night, and I was seated before a cheerful fire, in our large south-east parlour. I was thinking over the days that were past, I had forgotten that my eye had lost its lustre, that my cheek was colourless, and that I had experienced so many years of sorrow. I was thinking of my father and mother, now dead and gone, and how tenderly they loved me; of the companions of my youth, and my happy bridal hour. At this moment I was aroused by a loud and violent knocking at the door. A group of men entered, amongst whom I looked in vain for my husband. They had come, they said, on an unpleasant business. My husband was a bankrupt, and they had come to attach his house and property. I requested permission to examine their execution. It was levied by a rum-selling professor of religion.

I gave up my splendid mansion and all its costly furniture, without a murmur I followed my husband to a rude built and low thatched cottage down to the edge of the shore. Even here I could have been happy. But other woes and other sorrows still awaited me. I was here destined to see two of my boys become the victims of intemperance, and to follow the other three to their long and silent abode. Would that I had buried them in infancy.

[To be continued.]

A PHANTASY.

BY MRS. L. J. S. CASE.

It is a bright May morning. An old man sits under a large oak, leaning on his staff, and gazing on the beautiful scene around him, with something of a sense of youth. The

warm sunshine seems to recall his own spring-time, and his heart catches again a portion of its faded freshness. The late autumn has come to him, when the last flower has perished, and the sere leaves have all fallen, and the spirit wears the solemn serenity of that brief and languid sunshine, so soon to pass away for ever. He is not unhappy, for he has outlived the sensibility of his heart, though, a long time ago, he saw the coffin hide the last of his kindred; and he leans listlessly on his staff, or draws figures with it, in the well trodden path. Yet he has suffered, yea, most intensely, when, one after another, the beloved left him, and he, now so calm, who seems never to have known grief, even by name, once thought life could not be borne, when, she, his early and dearest friend, lay down to her rest. But that was a long time ago, and if he has not forgotten it, the thought comes without a pang, and he is now as tranquil as the sheep that lie at a little distance from him.

A bell rings. It is Sabbath morning, and the steeple, that glimmers above yon grove, is calling the village to worship. The old man lifts his head and ponders on those sounds. He has heard them many times. He hears them each succeeding Sabbath, yet they come now to him with an unwonted association. They have touched some familiar, but long silent chord, and the whole soul is thrilling to its vibrations. Long forgotten places are again rising before him.

A spirit is beside him. He sees her not but she is there, summoned from her sleep by those bell-notes, and she takes his hand and leads him through these old, forgotten places. The surrounding landscape fades. There are hills and valleys that have long been strangers to his eye. A bright river washes a green slope, on whose smooth turf a group of noisy archers are at play, some tossing balls, some whirling hoops, and some, the girls, chasing butterflies. But there is one, a sober-looking lad, who has just launched a little boat on the stream, and is intently watching its progress with his thoughtful eyes. His cheek is rosy and the sunny curls are lightly waving in the air. That furrowed old man, gazing on vacancy, bears but little resemblance to that fair-browed architect, whose tiny shallop occupies all his mind.

The spirit opens another scene.—It is the counting-house of a merchant in a large city, but so luxurious in its furniture, it looks more like the private sitting room of a man of business. One or two clerks are looting on the rich settees, for it is not the fashionable hour for their active duty. Carriages are dashing down the street—many a gay equipage rattles along the dusty pavement, but that handsome young man, and beautiful girl, do not heed the clatter. They hear the music of each other's voice. Love has a melody of its own, that drowns all harsher tones. She has come to the counting-room, ostensibly to seek Papa; a rival lover would say it was to meet his handsome clerk. No matter. Papa will not frown and thwart the love of his only daughter, and they have only to declare themselves, and an elegant parse, and liberal outfit, comes with his consent. That young clerk has forgotten now that little boat, and the smiling river of childhood.

Again—It is a festival night at the house of the rich Mr. C—, in Bowden Square. Floods of light stream through its windows, and music echoes far down into the adjacent streets. His eldest daughter had just entered into a felicitous and fortunate marriage, and this is the wedding party. The rooms are brilliant with beauty and fashion, and crowded with elegant luxuries. The rich proprietor walks through the glittering saloons, with his fair, matronly wife on his arm, as dear to each other, as when they made love, a long time ago, in the window of her father's counting room. They are the happy parents of a beautiful, and promising family. The spirit leads him through many, and varied scenes; some of joy, some of sorrow, of care, and of quiet, and now she pauses.

It is a sick room, nay, it is the room of death. On that bed lies the deserted clay of one, who has left all tears behind, in her upward flight, but the survivors weep. A few short years, and they too will lie as calmly; all but one, that bowed and spirit-stricken man, who mourns the wife of his early love, the companion of happy years. But heaven is kind to him, and religion is doing her healing work on his bleeding heart. There is still luxury around, but what cares the mourner for wealth she may never share?

There is a small, neat parlor, in the country village. A cheerful but not lavish, fire is burning on the hearth. The carpet is of the plainest kind, and so is the accompanying furniture. A middle-aged woman, in a widow's mourning, sits by the small table, at plain sewing, now and then stirring with her foot a cradle, in which an infant is sleeping. An old man sits by the fire with his head bowed on his staff, in that misty state of senses, when Sleep contends with Thought and finally gains the mastery. The contour of his form, and as much of his features as are visible, denote the rich merchant of Bowden Square, but luxury has given place to bare competence, and a smiling family are reduced to one child, and her fatherless boy.

Again—There is a quiet grave-yard, where humble headstones tell of lowly sleepers beneath. Among these, was one small, white pillar, where the mound is more neatly shedded, and the seeds of a few of the most com-