

TEMPERANCE ADVOCATE,

DEVOTED TO TEMPERANCE, EDUCATION, AGRICULTURE & NEWS.

PLEDGE.—We, the undersigned, do agree, that we will not use Intoxicating Liquors as a Beverage, nor Traffic in them; that we will not provide them as an article of Entertainment, nor for persons in our Employment; and that in all suitable ways we will discountenance their use throughout the community.

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The Moral Niagara.

(From the New England Diadem.)

The late accident at Niagara Falls, by which the soul of a child was released from our comparative worm-like pilgrimage through the earth, to the butterfly collection and distribution of spiritual sweets in the Angel world, has brought to our recollection an accident on the same scene which occurred some months since.

The case was that of an individual, who, attempting to pass from the Canada to the American side of the river, above the rapids, was gradually drawn by the current so far down the river, as to render escape impossible, and destruction by passing over the Falls the result.

A simple reference to the incident is, doubtless, sufficient to bring its particulars immediately before the mind of the reader. It is not therefore our intention in referring to it, to attempt a picture of the progress of the startling tragedy from its commencement to its close,—of the entire absence of fear or distrust with which the victim pushed his frail bark from the shore,—or of the care-dispelling beauties of nature, or the absorbing interest of some engrossing affair of the business or romance of life, which may so far have entranced his attention, as to render it capable of distraction only, when the fact that superhuman efforts alone could rescue him from the terrible destruction to which all around and beneath was hurrying him, would not “down” from his vision.

Neither are we equal to the work of attending him as he is gradually compelled to admit the unwelcome truth, that his utmost strength must succumb to the forces of destruction by which his feather-like skiff is being hurried to a most unlooked for launch! Nor may we accompany him and portray the mingled feelings of wonder and fear, hope and determined energy with which—abandoned by his boat—which some malicious rock had shattered at a blow, he renewedly attempts to arrest his progress to the falls, by obtaining hold upon some one of the numerous rocks with which the rapids are studded. Still less can we tell of those transient thrills of joy with which, once he raised himself, apparently secure, upon one of those slippery rock projections, instantly to be hurried on his course: and again arrested his journey by momentarily clinging to one of the piles of the Observatory Bridge, and inwardly responded to the congratulatory shout of the excited spectators on the shore. Least of all shall we attempt the colors of that last look of intelligence, mingling all the emotions of the soul and reminiscences of life in one heartfelt expression, with which, abandoning all further effort for hope of rescue, he yields himself to the decree which launches him over that infinite precipice, into the eternal thunder storm below!

We have another work before us, shadowed in our heading. It is, with such success as we may, to draw the likeness which exists between the destruction of human physical life in this material Niagara, and the overwhelming of

intellectual, moral, and spiritual life, in that Niagara of Intemperance which flows through the hills and valleys of this mundane life.

But our comparison fails us in the outset, as we consider the disparity of numbers in the victims of those two destructive agents. While those of the first are so few, that we fail at the moment to recall more than three, those of the last are computed only by thousands. How much more provident are men against the evils which are merely physical, and therefore transient in their effects, than against those whose results go with us far into Eternity! We may also remember, that while there may be cases in which it might devolve upon one as a duty to expose himself to imminent danger in crossing the Niagara of waters, we can conceive of none which would call upon him so much, as to taste of that spiritual cataract which has drowned the souls of thousands of strong-hearted and deep-minded men,—men well capable, it would seem, of fording even the mental rapids of intemperance!

Our parallel diverges again as we consider that most melancholy fact, that while upon the course of the last mentioned rapids we discover many who make it their business of life to tempt men to embark upon its treacherous waters, and others who derive a demoniac pleasure from forcing those who may have obtained a foothold upon the terra firma of Total Abstinence again into the current of indulgence; there is hardly a man to be found in any community, who would not exert his utmost powers to rescue a brother on his course to the falls of the Niagara of waters.

But our parallel will converge as we proceed.

Occasionally sipping off a little wine, innocent in itself were it not for the fatal current to which it is the precursor, is the slight eddy in the river above the rapids in the river of Intemperance, so trivial and so transient in its effects as to attract no notice. And the social meeting, accidental or otherwise, in which the song, the jest, the story and the toast exhilarate the intellect, and distract its attention from the gradually increasing effects which are their certain concomitants are not wanting a likeness in the exciting, and intoxicating motion and scenery of the nearer approach to the rapids of the river. And if it be not indeed a paradox to say that there is any parallel in intensity of interest to the condition of the young man just approaching the scene of the great struggle of life, when he finds himself in the power of the current of Intemperance, surrounded in all directions by difficulties which baffle description, struggling against them at one time, and seeming to be gaining distance upon the course upward to safety, and at another losing ground and despairing of escape, nerving himself once more to the struggle against habit, physical, moral, and mental, and again compelled to abandon resistance and bound forward to destruction;—his boat of reputation dashed to atoms by some wicked hand, the friends of respectability slipping from his embrace when he appeals to them for help, and rather accelerating his descent; the emotions of stern resolve,