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The Widow's Funeral.

It was a widow's funeral! Strangers and friends were mingling as they gathered around the narrow house. There was a peculiar solemnity, a heavy sadness, diffused through the whole group: not that strong grief, as when the ties of nature are rent asunder for none of her own family were there; it was a mourning, not so much for the loss of the living, as for the sorrows of the dead. She was a blighted woman! they said, as the pensive tones of her voice, and that melancholy smile, came so mournfully back to their remembrance, now silent and sealed in death. I drew near to see the corpse; it was that of a delicate woman, past sixty: her pale brow had a troubled aspect; the lines were faint, but they had been the work of many years; while a stronger line, in the lower part of the face, showed that the harrow had been held back, which otherwise might have riven deep its furrows in so delicate a fabric. There were many there who remembered her in her youth—the beauty of her time, “when many gazed upon her with hope, and all with pleasure.” a sweet flower, they said, transplanted from them just in her opening bloom: and none had a fairer prospect; every one thought it would be a summer sky; but, alas! it proved but a congregation of grim clouds, that poured its cold sleet on her bowed head. I soon learned her melancholy story. She was married before she was twenty, to the only one who could ever win her whole affections. He was a young physician, of an established reputation for talents and moral worth: he had a fine person, was elevated and gentlemanly in his bearing. The happy couple began their married life in one of the prettiest villages in New-England. Surrounded by an intelligent polished society, they found themselves in the possession of every enjoyment, and the dreams of fancy seemed no idle vision, when from the spontaneous flow of pleasure in each passing day, they were more than realized. But she had scarcely been a year in her new home, when a cloud would often steal over her fair countenance, and the tear in its large big drop, would be quickly chased away.

In a few years a little family gathered around her, and the clouds that once would flit away at the lightest breeze, had now settled down in a fixed gloom, although, as was very apparent, not without a constant struggle to throw it off, while there was scarce a suspicion of its real cause. Her husband was respected by the whole community, holding a high place in the public estimation, his standing firm to all eyes but one, and from the lips of that one, none new the worm that was gnawing at the root of all the prosperity and happiness of the house. Concealment at last had done all it could do; forbearance, watching, striving, to keep him up, standing between him and all the world, were no longer available; the raging passion had reached that point beyond which there is no control. Like the maddening river when its streams are all full, it suddenly bursts every barrier, breaking down all that lies in its way, sweeping the lowlands in one common ruin—so did the husband of this poor woman suddenly burst upon the public—his self respect, his property, his reputation, all, all broken down—his wife, and his interesting little family, engulfed in fearful wretchedness.

That degraded man had been in the daily habit, even before his marriage, of drinking ardent spirits. Alas in those days there were no checks, no beacons held up to warn of coming danger in that sea of rocks and whirlpools.

It grew and grew upon him, and not till it had sapped the whole structure, did it ever gain the complete mastery—when he fell never to rise. His fine house was taken by his creditors; the beautiful furniture, article by article, was by him all pawned away, and then the merciless passion took the necessaries. He was a wanderer in the streets, often falling in the highway, subject to insults and indignities which belong not to a man; his degradation was rapid, and his descent was fearful; he became loathsome and cruel, and this sweet delicate woman, of a spirit ever gentle, faithful in her duties, sensitive to all the purer enjoyments of life, fled

from a home robbed of every comfort, haunted daily with terrors, and frightful with dismal forebodings. She took her young children, and penniless sought an asylum among her early friends; and no one could forget how silent and unobtrusive were her griefs as she attempted to mingle herself again with the friends of happier days. Submitting to her fate as what was inevitable, she tried to be cheerful; but she was ever after a lone woman—“a stricken deer that had left the herd;” she was never again to be the moving spring of her own household, guiding and cherishing the young, ministering to the poor, delighting in hospitable deeds, with which once she used so gracefully to charm her guests; that raging volcano, from which she had sought to escape, had scathed forever all that was to her beautiful and lovely in life, and she stood like a blasted tree in a desert. Her poor miserable husband, once the dearest object to her heart, was, from being a vagabond on the earth, come to an untimely end, shorn of half his days; the grave closed upon him with sufferings too painful for the heart to bear, and with no ray of hope to alleviate its horrors—and from its everlasting stillness, there could come back no quietness to the living.

But the absorbing, living grief of her life, was her children, her three darling sons, whom she had nurtured with the tenderest affection through their infancy and childhood, and from whom, just in the forming of their characters, she must be separate; for in the entire wreck of the family, they must be divided off to those who could take them; and ever after in secret did she bewail her want of a home for them; for she never saw them but to hear some complaint of their unhappiness. True, they lived with good people, and all that was required of them was always to do right, always to do well. Alas! poor, frail, erring human nature! It is the plant in its native soil, luxuriating in a broad ground, throwing wide its exuberant branches, that throws out more freely and shoots upward with increasing vigor under the strong pruning, while the poor exotic stunts and withers away. It is not a mother alone that must feel for the sorrows of the young, in the time of their tenderest sensibilities, susceptible to pleasure from the slightest cause, and as easily tortured with misery, to have shame and want for their only inheritance. Proud and restive they may be—for the elements of man's nature are fine—honor and dignity are among his earliest attractions—and in his attempts to ascend to that higher region, he mistakes the way, the world meets him with her frowns and checks, and he recoiling in his agony, looks in vain for that home where the faults are sheltered, and the virtue though small, is sought out and cherished with an unwearied love till it grows and strengthens, and becomes a guide and blessing to its owner. Thus did this poor woman grieve over the crushed hopes and disappointed expectations of her sons. Not one of them was successful in life. She tried to help them; but she was too frail for such hard service, and she sunk away and left the world a lingering victim to a train of woes that comes not in the ordinary course of events—is not the appointment for man on the earth, but is the work alone of intemperance. Man has done it all—and who can measure its depths? Who can calculate the amount of misery in one single family? Who can trifle with its endless miseries? Let the manufacturer and vender of these ensnaring poisons, as they rejoice in their gains, ponder and tell.—*Journal Am. Temperance Union.*

Intemperance the Idolatry of Britain.

BY W. R. BAKER ESQ.

“Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him when he saw the city wholly given to Idolatry.”—Acts xvii. 16.

From the time that the apostle Paul became a preacher of the faith he once attempted to destroy, his zeal for the glory of God, and the salvation of sinners was of the most unwearied and self-denying character. He determined to know nothing among men,