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THE UNKNOWN TEMPERANCE AGENT.

To the Editor of the Temperance Advocate.

Sir,—The following story was related to me a few years ago by a man who was employed as a temperance agent in one of the states of the union. It is too good to be buried; and I hope that the telling of it anew may benefit the temperance cause in this land.

JOEL FISK.

"Well, the sun is fast descending behind the western hills, and I am still twenty miles from the place of my appointment. These short November days, muddy roads, and impassable mountains, are not very comfortable things in one's way who is eager to get forward. But I must give it up; I could not foresee these difficulties when I went on my appointment to — county. Impossible to reach there to-night. But who can tell but what my delay may be the means of accomplishing some good in this mountainous region?" Thus mused Mr. C., a temperance agent, as he passed along through a gorge of the mountain, and emerged into an open, cultivated valley.

Just as the last rays of the setting sun were gilding the tops of the lofty hills, he reached a decent looking farm house, with a tavern sign swinging at the corner.

His jaded beast immediately showed a strong inclination to haul up, and seek for provender and rest. To this inclination the master yielded, and called for a night's entertainment. In the bar room was a company of loafers, pretty well, and much excited about something. While the agent was taking his supper, he heard through the open door remarks like the following: "Now that temperance meeting at the school house to-night ought to be broken up." "So I thought, and it shall be." "I wish that people knew enough to mind their own business." "Well, I'll not be bought by them, I can assure you." "I'll never sign away my liberty." "If I should take the pledge, I should want to drink ten times more than I do now." "Yes; that is the way they all do, only these temperance folks get behind

the door!" "I hate hypocrisy; come, landlord, give us a bumper." "Now, let us all go down to the meeting, and give them a blowing up." "That's right!" exclaimed the landlord, "I'll treat you for that." "Who will be our speaker?"

At this juncture the agent, having finished his repast, entered the bar room. "What's the excitement among you, landlord," said he.

"O, those teetotalers, as they are called, who are turning the world upside down, have got into our neighbourhood, and they are going to have a confounded meeting to-night, right under my nose; and I verily believe that they would rob me of all my custom if they could. We talk of going down to give them a blowing up; only we want some one who can talk fast to be our speaker." "Well, sir, I am the very man for you. I have seen a great deal of these temperance folks, and I can talk as fast as any of them, I assure you. Just appoint me your speaker, and let us all go down, and I'll give it to them, I tell you." "Good, good," cried a dozen voices. "Now, let us all go, and we will have a rare time of it." "I guess some of them will look blue before the meeting is over," said the landlord. "I guess so too," replied the unknown.

Matters being settled, all started for the school house, singing and bawling as they went. The whole welkin rang with obstreperous noise. "Come, come," said the stranger, "let us get a little more quiet, or they will bar the door against us."

So saying, he took the landlord by the arm, and walked on; the next fell in behind, two and two, and in this orderly manner they entered the house. A whole seat was vacated for them, and down they sat. They listened attentively to a young man, who was reading an address, thinking that their turn would come next. At length the speaker sat down, and the chairman gave an opportunity for any others to address the meeting. The eyes of the whole drinking gang were now turned to their speaker; and the loud whisper, "Get up, get up, quick," burst from every lip; and the landlord, who sat next to him, applied his elbow to his side with so much force, that it quickly brought him to his feet. "Mr. President," said he, "we hold that all men are the friends of temperance; but with regard to total abstinence, and these temperance societies, there are many different opinions, we can assure you; and against taking the pledge many strong objections can be urged. Shall we deny ourselves the temperate use of the good things which a kind Providence has bestowed upon us? Shall an independent man be called upon to sign away his liberty? And you know, Mr. President, that the stronger a man binds himself, the greater inclination he will have to do the very thing which he has bound himself not to do. And these societies, whenever they succeed, infringe upon the lawful rights of the licensed tavern keeper. I have known some such completely thrown out of business, just by these temperance reformers, and these Washingtonian societies, as they are called. Why do they call them Washingtonians, I wonder? Did not General Washington drink spirits temperately? And shall we undertake to be better than he was? And