

# CANADA TEMPERANCE ADVOCATE

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## The Factory-Girl.

A Girl of fifteen summers toils in a factory until her heart and brain ache, and she turns away to the lone group at the desolate hearth, and sinks hungry to her fitful rest. The cold-tongued bell breaks in upon short slumbers and drips the slight and weary frame again to its bitter task. Saturday night finds her turning homeward with a feverish cheek and a heavy step. A father calls at the office of the manager, secures her earnings and during the sabbath squanders it all at the dram-shop with his boon companions!

The factory-girl once idolized that father, but hunger, and poverty, and abuse have taught her to hate him; and as he goes to the grocery in the morning, an involuntary prayer goes up from the child's heart that he will no more return. So accursing are the effects of strong drink!

Long and weary days pass away and yet the factory-girl toils, and at night gathers with her brothers and sisters gratefully around a loaf of brown bread. There is a jug of whisky on the shelf, and an imbruted father, slumbering on the hearth.

A dark and cheerless pathway opens to the factory-girl.

The worse than orphans are driven out from the wretched home and scattered here and there as paupers, kept by the town. One little girl, a fair-haired, blue-eyed beautiful creature of three summers is taken by a family. Away in an entry-way, without sufficient clothing, hungry, and no eye but God's to look kindly down upon her, she dies in the winter night—dies cold, hungry, and covered with vermin! and the older sister could not even weep upon the child-pauper's grave, her of the fair and mild blue eye.

With the brand which society once cruelly affixed upon the brow of the drunkard's child, the factory-girl entered into the great battle of life. Without education or friends, she was compelled to perform the most menial drudgery. The shadows that then clouded the sky of her youth have mingled with and darkened the happiness of after years. Her brothers grew up and some of them followed in the footsteps of their father and became drunkards. One was drowned. Another rests beneath the soil. A younger one, a faultless model of manly beauty, and as noble in heart as in form, was taken by pirates at sea, and killed only when he towered the last of his crew upon the slippery decks, and his arm was hewn from his body. Two others wrestle now with an appetite which dogs their footsteps with remorseless craving, and but one lives the soul of manhood and honor.

Thus were those linked to her by the strongest ties that can bind us to each other, wrenched away and driven up and down the world. The father lived on a drunkard, and at a ripe old age died a drunkard by the road side, and a gravestone tells where he sleeps.

Such are but the outlines of a childhood and youth of suffering, humiliation, and sorrow. The details are known only to the sufferer and to God. Memory rolls back upon its bitter tide the history of such scenes, the fountain of tears is opened fresh, and flows as bitterly as in the past. Childhood without sunshine! The thought is cold and dark indeed. This hasty sketching would apply to unnumbered thousands of such cases. As the sand upon the sea shore, the blades in the meadow, or the leaves in summer-time or the stars that glitter in the blue above are the histories of such ravages upon the hopes and happiness of youth. They will never be known until the record of the angel shall be unrolled at the judgment.

That factory-girl—that drunkard's daughter—that child-pauper who toiled while a drunken father drank down her wages—who went hungry for bread—who was deprived of society and education, and entered upon life's stern realities with no inheritance but poverty and a father's infamy—is our mother!

God! how the veins knot and burn as the tide whose every drop is bitter with the memory of her wrongs sweeps to our fingers' ends. Our soul throbs firmly in our nih until we clutch involuntary for a second blade, and wish the drink traffic embodied in one demon form, that we could go forth with God's blessing and smite the hell-borne monster. We look upon her head now thickly flecked with threads of silver, and wish that the temperance reform could have dawned in her day. We look upon the tear that steals down her cheek as the dark days of yore are called up, and our manhood's cheek burns with indignation. She was robbed—cruelly, basely robbed. She hungered for bread to eat! She was shut out of society and its privileges because she had no home. She was pointed at as a drunkard's child! She toiled until her heart ached with pain, and the dram-seller clutched from the hands of an imbruted father the last penny of her hard earnings! OUR MOTHER! God of justice and truth! give us but the power to-day, and we would strangle every hydra whose breath is blasting the hope of others as if blasted hers.

To that mother we owe the most of our hatred to the accursed traffic. We imbibed it from her breast, and learned it of her in childhood. A father, too, his strong form unfainted by the scourge, has taught us the same lesson. The memories of his own childhood are darkened by the thoughts of a drunken father. He grappled alone with life's difficulties—commenced his career by working to pay the debts of his deceased father.

Thus from the cradle have we been educated to hate the scourge. That hatred is mingled with every drop in our veins. It grows with our growth and strengthens with our strength. In the high noon of manhood we