

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 Accountant or Ruined Merchant.

BY ROBERTUS.

"The wither'd frame, the ruin'd mind,
The wreck of passion left behind
A shriveled scroll, a scattered leaf
Scared by the Autumn blast of grief."—BYRON.

A few months ago it chanced to be my lot to be traveling alone on one of the principal railroads in the middle States. It was one of those close sultry days in the month of August, when the sun was nearly vertical, and seemed to radiate his beams of fire with overwhelming fury; scarce a breath of air was stirring, the flocks were gathered in clusters under the shady trees, and nought could be seen or heard astir, but the cars speeding their way rapidly to their place of destination. There being in the cars no one I knew, I took my seat at one of the windows, for the double purpose of catching what breeze might be generated by the rapid motion of the cars, as well as to get a view of the surrounding country as we swept along. After stopping at numerous places, we at length arrived at the depot, where it was necessary to change from the cars to the steam boat, for the accomplishment of our journey. The boat was crowded and jammed in all parts, and not a face could I recognize as a friend, and notwithstanding the great heat of the day, everything looked cold and unfriendly. After a hasty survey of the boat and a glance at the physiognomy of the dense throng upon deck, I took my seat on the forward part of the Sea horse, for so it might be termed, for the rapidity with which it glided down the river; in order to avail myself of a more extensive view of it, and the beautiful carpet of verdure which was spread out upon its banks in splendour and magnificence unprecedented in my conception of so grand a scene. The river looked like one broad sheet of silver spread out before us for miles, not a ripple was seen to disturb its sleep, but the waves that were occasioned by the movement of the boat, and even they moved sluggishly, and scarce raised a murmur as they were cast upon the green tufted beach. Occasionally the banks of the shore would rise to high bluffs overtopped with high spreading trees, with here and there a neat latticed summer house occupied by fair forms, whose snow white drapery and attentive look upon us, forcibly reminds me of the days of yore, when the Fairy Queens were the residents of such picturesque spots, and looked down upon the busy concerns of men with disdain; and at their own volition rode upon the wings of the winds, and soared from cliff to cliff, and from mountain top to mountain top. The scene was indeed highly romantic, captivating all the powers of my mind with its gorgeous splendors. As if for variety sometimes the hills would sink down until they were nearly on a level with the river, and instead of the rugged hills, overtopped with thick set groves which obstructed the sight, there would be the most beautiful landscapes spread out before the eye; widening and extending on every side, until they would present to the astonished gaze, the imagery of a Scottish vale. Along the margin of the river were luxuriant growths of flowers, presenting almost the variety of a summer house: in the distance could be seen the haymakers cutting and piling the "sweet smelling grass," while here and there in this beautiful vale, were the most splendid country seats, uniting the grandeur of Oriental scenery and architecture, with the vivacity and energetic life characteristic of our countrymen. The whole scene was truly enchanting, and filled the mind with elevated feelings and conceptions of the Great Architect of the

Universe, for here was certainly the display of his creative power in the diversified hill and dale—the rich verdure with which it was covered—the gentle and unruffled river meandering its way through green clad hill and dale, and the smiling appearance worn by all the things of nature, both animate and inanimate. These things until this time occupied my whole attention, but becoming conscious of my thoughtful situation, I endeavoured to divert my thoughts by a glance at the surrounding personages.

Some appeared to be in their happiest mood knowing nothing of life's cares; others with countenances more grave than gay, bore the mark of reflective minds, but cheerful and serene, as if conscious of filling up life's fleeting years, in doing good to their fellows; while others in another quarter had not countenances so beaming with happiness and uninterrupted enjoyment. I looked at the several classes in turn, and after I had looked upon the gay and thoughtless, and then to the more thoughtful, my eyes fell upon the class with less gaiety of spirit. Pretty soon my attention was fixed upon a man who appeared to be busily hurrying over an account, but soon found it was the effect of intoxication. He held in one hand a book which looked like a small note book used by business men—in the other a pencil which he used in making the calculation. There he sat leaning over his account, nothing appeared to interest him, everything was unnoticed except his account, he would go over it with the most intense attention, and to all appearances have it finished, then he would spit on it and rub it out, then go through the same processes of summing up and rubbing out, which he did an indefinite number of times, though he made not a figure. I stood looking at him a long time, his singular movements so arrested my attention. His appearance was that of degradation, yet in his distorted countenance, and grimaces, which forcibly reminded me that he belonged to the monkey tribe instead of the *genus homo*, I could see something which indicated he had been in the possession of better days, though nearly obliterated by the deep inroads of misery, and the absolute powers of King Alcohol. His intellectual faculties were well developed, his forehead to be prominent, though hid almost by the long hair which he suffered to beat about in confusion by the breeze, and more than all his apparent devotion to business and influence. While I was thus gazing upon him my mind involuntarily turned to the days when he was young and vigorous, engaged in prosperous business, in the possession of wealth, surrounded by a happy family circle, and enjoying all the luxuries of life. I imagined him to be drinking out of the very fountain of pleasure—the cares of life suspended from his sight, and every day a day of sunshine which lightened up his path with the genial rays of prosperity. I became so interested that the desire to know more about his history impelled me to approach him, though at other times a sight like this would make me almost shudder, for there is nothing I dislike to see so much as an intemperate beastly man. I approached and addressed him, again he looked up at me with an idiotic surprise, and seemed to signify he did not want to be interrupted, then resumed his work again. Not to be baffled by this I remarked to him he must have a long and difficult account to sum up, and that it must be wearisome on such a warm day.

He raised his head as if he did not comprehend what I said, and vaguely answered, he did know that it was difficult, but the end seemed hard to find. Well said I it appears to be the all-absorbing thing with you; I presume you have been accustomed to such obtrusive accounts? He replied he had at one time in his life many such, when he was in a prosperous business in the city