

the altar of God, extended to the lost inebriate the hand of affection and kindness. There, he who had sunk in the scale of humanity, even lower than the most degraded of his species, was warmed and nourished by the very being whose hopes and aspirations he had forever crushed. Woman! thou art indeed an enigma! All weakness, when danger appears in the distance, but indomitable in the hour of trial!

From the lips of Mrs. Carleton herself, I learnt the sickening story of her long years of suffering and wretchedness, yet in the recital, not one unkind expression, not a single term of reproach, escaped her lips while speaking of her husband. For his conduct she offered no excuse—nothing in palliation of his dreadful course of life, and whatever might have been her hopes, she gave utterance to no expectation that he would ever again return to the sober walks of life. The rich overflowing of her buoyant heart seemed forever dried up, or crushed beneath a load of misery, for whose alleviation, time, the last prop of the wretched, had brought none of its healing balm.

With this interview closed my acquaintance with this once interesting family. Years rolled away and I had ceased entirely to think of their condition, except at long intervals, when some kindred incident called to mind the ruin of those in whose welfare I had accidentally acquired no inconsiderable interest. In a word, they became to me as though they had never been.

In the course of last summer I had occasion to visit the interior of Massachusetts. Arriving near night fall at a small town in the County of ———, my horse jaded, and myself in need of repose, I drew up at a somewhat uninviting public house, the only one in the village, where I ordered supper and demanded accommodations for the night. I noticed a considerable concourse of people about the house and in the public room, and from the conversation going on, learnt there was to be a temperance lecture that evening at the town house, standing a few rods distant from the hotel at which I stopped. I enquired of my host who was to address the meeting, whether a townsman of his, or a stranger?

A stranger, I reckon, was the reply. We have none of that sort of animal in this town; folks here mind their own business.

Do you know the name of the lecturer? was my next enquiry.

Haven't asked, was the laconic answer, and the publican turned into his bar, to serve a customer to a glass of brandy.

By this time the room was nearly full.—Some were drinking, and others ridiculing the great temperance movement, of which they had heard much and seen something. I soon perceived, however, that the cause had made little or no progress here, and I was well satisfied on another point, that those present, at least, were determined it should not; yet I was pleased to notice when the hour arrived, that nearly all made their way to the town house; some perhaps to create disturbance and others to wile away an idle hour before their last glass for the night.

With the crowd I passed over and took my seat in a remote corner of the building. The house was soon filled to overflowing. The body of it was taken possession of by a large concourse of ladies, while the outer seats and galleries were occupied mostly by men and boys. Near the main entrance, in the broad aisle, within the building, stood some twenty or thirty rough looking men, with long beards, poorly clothed, and manifesting that sort of breeding usually picked up in grog shops and low drinking houses. Their vulgar merriment, and their overstrained attempts at wit were insufferably disgusting. But what grieved me most was to see the female part of the audience often join in the

half-suppressed laugh which their miserable levity would at times provoke, instead of discountenancing their ill-timed and shameful violations of propriety. But this scene was of short duration, for in the very midst of the joking and jeering the lecturer made his appearance in company with a respectable looking gentleman, who I afterwards understood was a citizen of the town.

Make way for the steam engine! cried one of the persons standing in the aisle, as the lecturer was passing through the crowd.

Now for a cataract of cold water! exclaimed a companion at his elbow.

Landlord! shouted a third, give us a nipper of gin cocktail with a tomahawk in it!

This last attempt at wit produced a general laugh, which died away in a low titter along the side-galleries.

In the mean time the lecturer mounted the little desk at the farther end of the hall. He was a large, elegantly formed, middle aged man, with dark hair and dark eyebrows, beneath which rolled a full mellow pair of eyes, as clear as a living, undisturbed fountain of water. He surveyed the audience for a moment, then stepping upon the raised platform, brought himself to a speaking attitude within the niche of the desk before him. His commanding figure arrested every eye; all tumult ceased, and each member, as if spell-bound, suddenly became as silent and motionless as would have been so many marble statues.

I am here, commenced the speaker in a clear, strong, yet musical tone of voice, slightly inclining his body over the desk; I am here to relate the history of a drunkard; of a drunkard who, during long years of unmitigated inebriation, passed through all grades of human existence, from ease and affluence, down to the lowest depths of poverty and wretchedness. In a word, your speaker is here to relate the history of his own degradation.

With this simple exordium, followed by a few other observations, the lecturer entered upon the recital of the incipient steps of his career of ultimate inebriation, detailing in all the simplicity of truth, the effects produced on himself, on his standing, and finally on his wife and family. Before the expiration of the first half hour, every thing but the speaker and his subject had been forgotten, and as he went on, his own sober earnestness began to show itself on the feelings of the audience. While recounting his first deviations from the path of sobriety—the stated drams, and the gradual formation of that habit, which, in the end, overwhelmed him and all concerned with him in one common vortex of ruin—those poor fellows, standing in the aisle, to whom I have before referred, one after another began to near the speaker, till, without concert, or knowing why, they formed one compact group directly in front, and almost within reach of the lecturer! Such a scene I had never before witnessed, and I trembled, I confess, lest he who had raised the storm should be unable to control and direct it to the end for which it had been excited. I was mistaken. Every new effort was crowned with new success.

At length he spoke of the wrongs which intemperance had heaped on the heads and hearts of women. He related with thrilling minuteness the miseries which his own wife had endured—painted in language as dark and gloomy as the subject itself, the damp, lonely hovel in which for years he had resided in the midst of poverty and wretchedness; and then, as if suddenly impelled by an irresistible flood of inspiration, gave utterance to one of the most thrilling and lofty panegyrics on women I ever heard. As he enumerated their virtues—their patient endurance of wrong—their angelic meekness in the hour of affliction—their boldness in the midst of danger—their constancy, and more than all, their never-dying hope; his flight was fearfully grand, his