

enjoyed

THE CANADA

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.

VOL. XVII.]

MONTREAL, FEBRUARY 1, 1851:

No. 3

The Bottle.—Chapter III.

Poor Agnes! It was new and strange work for her this pawning of clothes to replenish the bottle, and get enough food to keep starvation from entering their comfortless home. Darkly fell upon her young spirit, a shadow of the wretchedness that was hurriedly approaching.

On the day after she had been to the Jew's, the bottle was again empty, and there was not a crust of bread in the closet. Again she went to the pawn-broker's with a garment—it was her mother's silk gown—and the Jew advanced two dollars upon it. The mother had expected to get at least five dollars on the dress, and she vented her disappointment in a way to make the poor child feel that she was to blame. The father scolded, and swore so terribly, that little Lotty shrunk into a corner, where she sat, looking at him fearfully over her shoulder. Agnes went into another room to give tearful utterance to the grief of her young heart, alone.

More than half of the sum received on the dress was spent in liquor, Agnes having to go out, almost daily, with the bottle, to get a fresh supply.

Soon, nearly all the spare clothing in the house had disappeared. Table and bed linen, the accumulation of years, was all gone; and most of Mrs. Latimer's and the children's best garments were in the hands of the Jew. Starvation was beginning to look them in the face.

"Do, James, try and get something to do," the wife said to her husband one morning, speaking in a fretful voice, as they sat eating their breakfast of dry bread. "It isn't right for an able-bodied man like you to be lazying about, and his wife and children on the brink of starvation. I know, if I was a man, I would find work somehow, if it was at sweeping the streets."

Hints, broad hints, had before been given; but they had done no good. Latimer would make some ill natured response, and declare that he had looked the town over for work, without being able to get anything to do.—With an angry imprecation he now arose suddenly from the table, and left the house.

The rebuke of his wife smarted him, because he felt that it was justly merited. Under the impulse of his feelings he called at a shop and asked if they did not want a hand.

"Yes, a steady, sober hand," was answered.

"Won't I do? There isn't a better workman in town."

"We want a sober, steady hand, upon whom we can depend," said the person to whom he had applied. "Do you call yourself such?"

"I do," returned Latimer.

"Then your looks very much belie you; that's all."

"Will you take me?"

"No, I believe not. We want a steady, sober hand, we employ no other. There is not a customer of old Morrison's in our establishment."

Latimer turned away, feeling rebuked and humbled, cursing himself, old Morrison, the bottle, and everything else;

and took as straight a course to the tavern of the man who had lured him on to ruin, as he could take. Morrison was standing behind his bar, as his victim came in; but now, he did not look smilingly upon his old customer, nor move forward, and assume that attitude and expression which says so plainly, "What'll you take?"—but remained leaning with his back against the shelves upon which were arranged his decanters, each with a lemon between by way of ornament, and to suggest the idea of punch.

"Give us some brandy, landlord," said Latimer, as he came up to the counter.

But Morrison did not move from where he stood. "Give us some brandy, I say, old fellow! Why don't you move? Is that the way you serve customers?"

Morrison, without moving from where he stood, placed his hand upon a door that opened towards him, and moving it so that the back became visible, pointed, meaningly, to sundry chalk marks thereon.

"Never mind, put another brandy down. I've just got a job of work, and will pay off the whole score on Saturday."

"Work? Have you got work at last?" enquired Morrison, his face relaxing a little from its sternness.

"Be sure I have. A first rate, steady job, at good wages."

"I am very glad to hear it." And, as the rumseller said this, he handed over the brandy bottle. "But take my advice, Latimer, and don't steam it quite so hard as you have been doing. Ease up a little, or it will be all over with you. I've been most afraid you were a gone case, as it was."

"Me?" And Latimer laughed low in his throat. "Don't be afraid of that, landlord; I'm as good a man as ever I was."

"I don't know, but you are. Call and see me again. Don't forget your old friends."

"I never do that, landlord," said Latimer, filling a second glass of brandy and then taking a seat by the stove, where he soon fell asleep under the influence of the strong potations he had indulged.

As Morrison stood and thought, after his victim had placed himself by the stove, he began to doubt the story of his having got a job of work. When he saw his head begin to fall loosely from its equiposed position on his neck, his doubts confirmed themselves, and he came round from his usual place behind the bar, and taking Latimer by the shoulders, roused him up with a rough shake. The man awoke swearing profanely.

"Why don't you go to work, if you've got a job?" said Morrison. "Do you expect to pay off your score by sleeping in my bar-room?"

Latimer's mind was too much in oblivion to understand what the landlord meant.

"Work?" he said, in a tone of bewilderment.

"Yes. Why don't you go to work?"

"Work? I've got no work. Wish to Heaven I had."