

Canada Temperance Advocate.

Temperance is the moderate use of things beneficial, and abstinence from things hurtful.

No. 6.

MONTREAL, OCTOBER, 1840.

VOL. VI.

THE INTENDED BRIDEGROOMS.

The evils resulting from drunkenness are so apparent, and press with weight upon so many portions of the community, that there are few persons who cannot expatiate upon those evils with thrilling eloquence. Of late years, and especially since the establishment of TOTAL ABSTINENCE SOCIETIES, these evils have been fearlessly exposed, and the only efficient remedy for them successfully pointed out. Some have reprobated drunkenness because of the effects which it produces on the physical health; others from a contemplation of the havoc it makes on the worldly interests of its unhappy votaries; and a third, and not an inconsiderable portion, dissuade their fellow-countrymen from those habits, indulgence in which is sure to "war against the soul."

There are, however, other and fearful evils inflicted by drunkenness, which affect not merely the individual interests of the unhappy victim, but which extend their influence far and wide through society—which dissolve the most endearing links—which entail misery and death on those who are nearest and dearest to the deluded victims—and which, generally speaking, are only repented of when all is beyond the hope of cure or of amendment.

Of this latter description of the evils resulting from drunkenness, the following narrative furnishes a most affecting illustration. It tells a pregnant moral; and may do more to advance the cause of true sobriety than some of the most elaborate lectures of the moral teacher. The reader may rely upon the truth of the story: the real names of the parties could be given, but they are withheld from respect to the feelings of survivors.

Walter Brown and James Maitland had been intimate friends from their boyhood. They had gone through the progressive classes of the grammar-school together, and together had completed their education at the university. They entered it on the same day, and on the same day left it. Unlike many of the friendships of youth, however, that of Brown and Maitland did not terminate with their educational course; it continued with unabated warmth and sincerity after they had entered into the world and began to share in its perplexities and troubles. But of these perplexities and troubles, it must be confessed, neither of the young men had by any means an undue proportion. Their fathers were both wealthy, and thus was their way smoothed to prosperity.

It was about this period—that is, after Brown and Maitland had entered into the world—that I became acquainted with them. It was in the year 18—. This acquaintance soon ripened into a sincere and cordial friendship. It was impossible it could be otherwise, at least on my part, for they were both excellent young men, highly educated and accomplished, possessed of first-rate abilities, available in their dispositions, and of noble and generous natures; in short, they were altogether two as fine young fellows as the city of G— could produce. They were both, at this time, about 25 years of age. As there were many points of similarity between them, and many striking coincidences in various circumstances, so did this sort of parallel progression continue after they had entered into life. They fell in love nearly at the same time; and after a courtship of some month or two's continuance—during all which time they had made confidants of each other, and reported progress, from time to time, as they advanced in their suits—they determined on "popping the question" on the same day, and if favourably answered, that the same day should see them united.

The objects of their choice were both beautiful and accomplished girls, and possessed of considerable fortunes. I knew them intimately, and was perfectly aware of the relationship in which they stood to my two friends; for I, too, was made a confidant in this

matter, and was occasionally informed by the young men themselves of the progress of their courtships. This attachment at length came to the usual crisis where the course of true love *does* run smooth. The lovers declared themselves, and were accepted with the full and free consent of all interested. The matches were thought highly eligible on all sides. I have already said that my friends had agreed to "propose" on the same day; nay, they reduced this understanding, as nearly as they possibly could, to the same hour. To this arrangement I was made privy; and it was agreed amongst us that they should meet in my room immediately after the important interview had taken place, and then and there announce to each other the results of their respective overtures. The hour of meeting at my apartments was fixed for eight o'clock in the evening; and at six the lovers repaired to their mistresses. Feeling deeply interested in the proceedings of my friends on the eventful night, it was with no little impatience and anxiety I waited for their appearance as the hour of eight approached. I tried to beguile the time by reading, but it would not do; the intense curiosity felt as to the results of the affair on the tapis with my friends, prevented me applying my mind to any thing but wild raving speculations on the deeply interesting matter in which they were engaged. While I was thus employed, the appointed hour struck; and in a few minutes after I heard a rapid foot on the stair. I knew it to be either Maitland or Brown; and I augured well for the happiness of the party, whichever of them it was, from the lightness and vivacity of his footsteps. I was right in my conjecture as to the coming visitor: in a second after, Maitland, with a face radiant with joy, and with a loud expression of exultation, burst into my room.

"Ah! ah! Bob," said I, stretching out my hand to him, "I see I may wish you joy. You need not say a word on the subject; your looks tell the happy tale."—"Right, right, Tom," replied Maitland, seizing my hand with wild glee; "I am a happy man. It's all settled with father and all. But what's become of Brown? I hope, poor fellow, he's been as successful as I have been; it would lessen my happiness greatly if he wasn't."

The words were scarcely out of Maitland's mouth, when Brown also burst into the apartment; and his countenance also told a tale of success. He was in exuberant spirits; and a furious shaking of hands and noisy interchange of congratulation marked the liberty of the trio; for I, too, rejoiced by sympathy in the happiness of my friends; and though not personally interested in the events of the evening, was scarcely less obstreperous in my glee.

It was now proposed, I think by Brown, that we should instantly adjourn to a certain well-known tavern in the city, and conclude the joyous evening by a supper. I for some time stoutly resisted the proposal, insisting that they should remain where they were, and sup with me. Would to God they had complied! for had they done so, the fearful scene which afterwards occurred would not have taken place. My friends would not listen to my proposal, and threatened jocularly, that if I did not accompany them of my own accord, they would carry me by force.

"You must come and sup with us, Tom," said Maitland; "so don't compel us to use violence. Why, man, we're such happy dogs to-night, that no man can with safety deny us any thing."

Seeing it useless to make any further objections or resistance, I at length consented to accompany them; and away, accordingly, we went in high spirits to the tavern alluded to. Supper was ordered and dispatched. A bottle of wine followed, then another, and another, till it became evident, in the course of a few hours, that we had attained a crisis, and could not possibly hold out much longer. We were all, in short, very tipsy; and our mirth, partial-