

# TEMPERANCE ADVOCATE,

DEVOTED TO TEMPERANCE, EDUCATION, AGRICULTURE & NEWS.

MONTREAL, JULY 15, 1851.

No. 16.

## The Drunkard's Bible.

Mr. President, said a short stout man, with a good humored countenance, and a florid complexion, rising as the last speaker took his seat—"I have been a tavern keeper."

At this announcement there was a movement through the whole room, and an expression of increased interest.

"Yes, Mr. President," he went on, "I have been a tavern keeper, and many a glass I have sold to you, and the Secretary there; and to dozens of others I see here"—glancing around upon the company.

"That's a fact," broke in the President, "many a gin-toddy and brandy punch have I taken at your bar. But times are changed now, and we have begun to carry the war into the enemy's camp. And our war has not been altogether unsuccessful, for we have taken prisoner one of the ransackers' bravest Generals! But go on friend W—, let us have your experience."

"As to my experience, Mr. President," the ex-tavern keeper resumed, "in rum-selling and rum-drinking, for I have done a good deal of both in my time, that would be rather too long to tell to-night—and one that I would much rather forget than relate. It makes me tremble and sick at heart, whenever I look back upon the evil I have done. I, therefore, usually took ahead with the hope of doing some good to my fellow-men.

"But there is one incident I will relate. For the last five years, a hard working mechanic, with a wife and seven small children, came regularly, almost every night, to my tavern, and spent the evening in my bar-room. He came to drink, of course, and many a dollar of his hard earnings went into my till. At last he became a perfect sot—working scarcely one-fourth of the time, and spending all he earned in liquor. His poor wife had to take in washing to support herself and children, while he spent time and the little he could make at my bar. But his appetite for liquor was so strong, that his week's earnings were usually gone by Tuesday of Wednesday, and then I had to chalk up a score against him, to be paid off when Saturday night came.

This score gradually increased, until it amounted to three or four dollars over his Saturday night's pay, when I refused to sell him any more liquor unless it was settled. On the day after he was thus refused, he came in with a neat burning breast-pin, enclosing some hair—no doubt, I thought of a deceased relative. This he offered in payment of what he owed. I accepted it, for the pin I saw at once was worth double the amount of my bill. I did not think, but indeed care about the question, whether he was the owner or not; I wanted my own, and in my selfish eagerness to get it, I hesitated not to take a little more than my own.

"I laid the breast pin away, and all things went on smoothly for a while. But he gradually got behind hand again, and again I cut off his supply of liquor. This time he brought me a pair of brass handirons, and a pair of brass candlesticks, and I took them and wiped off the score against

him. At last he brought me a large family Bible, and I took that for thinking, no doubt, I could sell it for some thing."

On the Sunday afterwards, having nothing to do, for I used to shut my bar on Sundays, thinking it was not respectable to sell liquor, I opened this poor drunkard's family Bible, scarcely thinking of what I was doing. The first place I turned to was the family record. There it was stated, that upon a certain day, he had been married to Emily. I had known Emily, when I was a young man, very well, and had once thought seriously of offering myself to her in marriage. I remembered her happy young face, and seemed suddenly to hear a tone of her merry laughter.

"Poor creature!" I sighed involuntarily, as a thought of her present condition crossed my mind—and then with no pleasant feelings I turned over another leaf. There was the record of the birth of her four children; the last had been made recently, and was in the mother's hand.

"I never had such strange feelings, as now came over me. I felt that I had no business with this book; but I tried to stifle my feelings and turned over several leaves quickly. As I suffered my eyes to rest upon an open page, these words arrested my attention.

"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; who so is deceived thereby is not wise."

"This was just the subject that under the feelings I then had, I wished to avoid, and I referred to another place. There I read—

"Who hath woe? Who hath sorrow? Who hath wounds? Who hath babbling? Who hath sadness of eyes? They that tarry long at wine. At last it biteth like a serpent; it stingeth like an adder."

"I felt like throwing the book from me, but once more turned the leaves, and my eyes rested upon these words—

"Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink; that putteth the bottle to him and maketh him drunk."

"I closed the book suddenly, and threw it down. Then, for half an hour, I paced the room backwards and forwards in a state of mind I never before experienced. I had become painfully conscious of the direful evils resulting from intemperance, and still more painfully conscious that I had been a willing instrument in the spread of these evils. I cannot tell you how much I suffered during the day and night, nor describe the fearful conflict that took place in my mind, between a selfish love of the gains of my calling, and the plain dictates of truth and humanity. It was about 9 o'clock, I think, on the same evening, that I opened the Drunkard's Bible again, with a kind of despairing hope that I should meet there with something to direct me. I opened at the Psalms and read two or three chapters. As I read on, without finding anything directly to my case, I felt an increasing desire to abandon my calling, because it was injurious to my fellow-men.

"After I had read the Bible, I retired to bed, but could not sleep. I am sure that during that night I thought of every