

# THE CANADA TEMPERANCE ADVOCATE,

DEVOTED TO

TEMPERANCE, EDUCATION, AGRICULTURE AND NEWS.

VOL. X.

OCTOBER 2, 1844.

No. 19.

## THE RECLAIMED.

BY T. B. ARTHUR.

"I asked her no questions, and she made no allusion to the condition I had been in. But I resolved to drink less. How terrible is such a resolution, when tempted by a single draught of liquor? Instead of six or eight glasses, I only drank four during that day; but on the next day I drank nine, and when I came home at night, could just make out to find my way to bed. For two weeks from that evening, I did not draw a sober breath! One night, about the end of that period, I came home in a feverish state of mind. My nerves had become excited to a high degree, from their long continued, excessive stimulation; I felt wild, restless, and irritable. It was three years after our marriage, and our only child, a little girl, was about two years of age. She was not well, and in consequence was very fretful. Her crying annoyed me exceedingly!"

"Hush!" I said in an angry tone to her, a few minutes after I came in. But she cried on.

"Aint you going to hush!" I said, louder and more angrily. Still her crying did not cease. I now felt very much excited, and my whole body seemed to burn with anger against her.

"If you don't hush this moment, I will kill you!" I exclaimed, advancing towards the little girl I loved so tenderly when sober, but against whom I felt a bitter indignation. But little Mary did not hush. Then I caught her up madly by one arm, and commenced beating her with all my strength—the strength of a nervous man inspired by intoxication and anger, exercised on a delicate child but two years old! One blow such as I gave her, was enough, it would seem, to have killed her. The poor child ceased crying on the instant; but I was in a rage, and ceased not my blows until her mother, terrified at the scene, sprung forward and snatched the little creature from my hand that held her high above the floor. To this I responded with a powerful blow on the side of my poor wife's head, and she fell senseless to the floor, and at the same moment, I kicked my child, who was clinging to her mother's garments; half across the floor:

"For a moment after, I seemed in the centre of a whirling and confused mass—then I became suddenly sober, and as perfectly conscious and rational as ever I was in my life. O! the agony of that terrible moment! I shudder and grow sick at heart even now, when I think of it. There lay both wife and child, pale and inanimate, and for all I knew, dead before me—and my hand had done the deed! My wife and child that I loved so tenderly! My gentle, uncomplaining wife, and sweet, innocent child!"

"But I cannot dwell longer here; I must pass on, or I shall not be able to finish my narrative." And the voice of the speaker trembled, and his tones were husky. "From that hour, my wife never smiled, and my little one seemed to me to have a sad expression in her dear young face; and I doubt not that the appearance was real. These changes always irritated me when I had been indulging to any considerable extent in drinking, and caused me to speak many an angry word to both. O sirl! well may strong drink be called a *devil*, for when it has once entered into us, we are possessed as of an evil spirit. For about a week after I had struck that blow, I was a sober man; but my reflections while sober were too terrible, and at last, to drown these, I drank to intoxication."

"It was in the month of June, 1841, on a warm sultry evening, that I repaired, about nine o'clock, to Howard's Woods, there to pass the night. Although the night was clear, there was no moon, and it was quite dark in the woods. I entered from the Falls road, and pursued my way up to the fence that encloses the garden of the old Howard mansion. I made out to climb over this, and then lay down just within it, and was soon sleeping as soundly as if I had been reposing on the softest bed."

"I suppose that I must have been sleeping about two hours,

perhaps three, when I seemed to be suddenly awakened by some one laying a hand upon my shoulder, and calling my name aloud. Instantly, I was surrounded by a light, which appeared to emanate from three figures, all in white, that stood before me. One glance was sufficient to tell me who they were. I could not mistake the face of Mary, nor the forms of my two children. But how changed they were. Each was dressed in garments white and shining, and upon each face reposed a peaceful smile. Instantly, however, as their eyes rested upon me, when it seemed they became suddenly conscious of my presence, did that quiet, happy smile pass away, and a sad expression rest upon each lovely countenance. Then they fixed their eyes upon me, for a moment reprovingly, and slowly faded from my sight. All around was now thick darkness.

"My next perception was that of the rain falling heavily upon my face, as I lay upon the ground. I was perfectly sobered, more so than I had been for years. For some moments after rising to my feet, I mused upon the strange apparition I have mentioned, and the more I mused upon it the more it troubled me. I could not of course lie again upon the wet ground. Nor could I find my way out of the wood. Suddenly, however, a broad flash of lightning blazed around, and in the instant that it lit up the air, I saw the direction that it was necessary for me to take, in order to return to the city.

"The storm now began to rage violently. The rain fell in a heavy, incessant shower; the lightning was frequent, and flashed out with a fierce glare, running it seemed along the ground, now about my feet, and now circling some tree like a blazing serpent. How deep and solemn was the darkness that followed each flash; quickly succeeded by terrific peals of thunder, that jarred the earth upon which I stood, as if shook by an earthquake! And the war of the tempest in that old wood was loud and wild.

"As I groped my way along, guided by the frequent glare of the lightning, drenched with the rain, and shrinking at each tremendous crash that broke over my head, my heart sank within me, filled with an awful fear. At last I was clear of the woods, and turned my steps towards the city. As I reached Franklin street the storm began to subside, and in course of half an hour, the sky was cloudless, and the stars shone with a clearer brightness than before. I was standing at the corner of Howard and Lexington streets, irresolute as to which way I should go, when the town clock rung out the hour of two. There were yet two hours before daylight, and I was wet to the skin, shivering with cold, yet raging with a most intolerable thirst for liquor. To abate in some degree, the latter, I drank ladle full after ladle full of pure cold water, from the pump near which I had paused. Then lying down upon a neighboring cellar door, I tried again to sleep. But I was so chilled from the dampness of my clothes, and so much unnerved, that I sought in vain to sink into unconsciousness until near day dawn. Then my sleep was brief and troubled, and I was awakened from it by finding myself shaken by a firm hand. I had been awakened thus a hundred times before, and had ever met rude and irritating language. For this I was again prepared, and rose up with an angry scowl upon my face. But the first words disarmed me.

"What a dreadful life this must be for a man to lead!" the person who had aroused me said, in a kind and sympathizing tone.

"This melted me right down. For years a kind word had never been spoken to me.

"O, it is dreadful!" I replied, earnestly looking up in his face.

"Then, my friend, why do you lead such a life?" he asked encouragingly.

"I wish I could lead a different one, for there is no pleasure in this," I replied, in a desponding tone.

"You may if you will," he said, and he spoke earnestly.

"But I shook my head and answered,

"No, no. My case is hopeless. I cannot resist the intense desire for liquor. I must have it."