

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 discontinue their use throughout the community.

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Losses at Sea.

A short time ago we observed a notice in some of our Exchanges, relative to the spirit rations of the Navy. It was proposed by the Admiralty to do away with Grog, and substitute tea or coffee; or if they preferred, to make the men an allowance in wages instead. The benefits, or rather blessings, which would result from the adoption of this plan, cannot be estimated. We have been often shocked when reading calamitous shipwrecks and catastrophes at sea, and fires and explosions of steamboats on our own Lakes, and in a great many cases no correct information was given of the cause of those accidents,—nor do we mean to insinuate that every occurrence of this kind was caused by the effects of liquor,—but we know for a fact, that the great majority of those calamities have been caused mainly by the use of this Deadly Poison. Losses have been of frequent occurrence in the Merchant's navy, which we attribute to the same cause. These, however, are now of less frequent occurrence, which may fairly be traced to the more general introduction of temperance principles in the management of their ships. But it is still a notorious fact, that in the merchant service the great mass of the officers and crews are still slaves to this vice. In Her Majesty's service also, we have numerous instances of the same effects, produced by the same cause. It would be well if the Navy Board, while abolishing the use of liquor by those in an inferior situation, would go a step farther, and prohibit those who have any authority, from using it also. We have been led to these few brief remarks from perusing the short account of the loss of H. M.'s ship Ajax, by fire, kindly furnished us by the "Old Sailor," and which we give below for the benefit of our readers:—

"In the month of February, 1807, H. M. ships Canopus, Thunderer, 74 guns, and frigate Erebus, Capt. Cappel, had only returned down the Dardanelles from Constantinople, and anchored under the Isle of Imbro, opposite Phrygia, a small town in Asia Minor, about 9 miles above ancient Troy—the Isle of Tenedos being astern.—We were joined by a small squadron of 5 sail of the line, one frigate, and one brig, under the command of Sir J. T. Wickworth, consisting of:—Royal George, 112 guns, bearing his flag; the Windsor Castle, 98 guns; the Pompey, 80 guns; the Ajax, 74; the Amazon, frigate; and the brig Hirondelle, which was afterwards wrecked on the Isle of Patmos. Every preparation was made for forcing our passage up the Dardanelles to Constantinople, and every heart was elated with the hope of success. The 14th of February came round. This being the anniversary of the battle of St. Vincent, also, Valentine's Day, —the sailors determined to commemorate the Victory; and many, instead of enjoying themselves rationally, actually made boasts of themselves; to this unlimited use of liquor may

mainly be attributed the dreadful scene that followed. I had turned into my hammock sober that night. About 9 o'clock, I was aroused by the boatswain's shrill call "All hands ahoy!" I got on deck almost immediately. What a terrible sight met my bewildered gaze,—the Ajax lay on our starboard beam, almost one blaze of fire. Our watch was ordered to slip the cable, as the guns were loaded, while the other was ordered to man the boats. I sprang into the second cutter which was soon unhooked from the tackles, and away we pulled for the Ajax. As we were passing under our stern the Ajax's poop deck blew up, the after part rearing up against the main mast. We gave way with four oars, and coming under the stern of the Ajax, we saw a poor fellow hanging by a rope, bare headed, while the lead from the taffrail rail was pouring upon him, we could not approach near enough with the boat to rescue him, on account of some spars that had been thrown overboard. I got along one spar with the boat hook, but could not reach him—the rope burned and he sank to rise no more. We then pulled round on the starboard side of the ship; the heat was now so intense that the lower deck guns began to discharge, and, while standing in the boat's bow, bearing off with the boat-hook, I was in a very perilous situation: the men soon filled our boat, and we were in great danger of sinking—when the barge of the Royal George came between us and the ship, sweeping about 20 men into eternity, who were hanging to the larboard gunwale. She soon extricated us from our danger, and we passed round her bow to our own ship. As far as I could learn there were about 363 lives lost, and most of them good swimmers. The reason of this was: the Hamilton frigate, lying astern of the Ajax, fearful of catching fire, slipped her cable and came to an anchor on the larboard beam of the Canopus, and the men jumped overboard to swim to her, and by this means were lost. The Ajax floated into a small cove near where the town of Tenedos formerly stood, and blew up about 5 o'clock next morning. Now, how did this happen? It is customary to have live stock on board, and the hay for their use was stowed away in the hollop deck, where the Middies and Doctor's mates sleep. The purser's Steward, it appears, was drunk, and let the candle fall in the hay, which being very dry soon ignited. The lower gun deck where the men slept was soon filled with smoke. A great many were in a state of intoxication, and being unable to help themselves, were suffocated, while others opening the hatches to let out the smoke, let in the air, and thus fostered the flame which it was impossible to extinguish."

We shall make no remarks on the above, but let the reader judge for himself. Before leaving this subject, however, we will give an incident which came under our own observation, and shows clearly the great necessity there is for the total abolition of the use of intoxicating drinks among seamen: A barque, we