

Canada Temperance Advocate.

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

No. 12.

MONTREAL, APRIL, 1839.

VOL. IV.

A VOICE FROM THE BORDERS OF ETERNITY, a Sermon preached in the Parish Church of Inverness, on Monday, October 24, 1831, after the Execution of Hugh Macleod, for the Atrocious Murder of Murdo Grant: By Alexander Clarke, A. M., one of the Ministers of Inverness.

The above is the title of a pamphlet of tragical interest. It gives a detail of the progress of an individual in crime, till he ended his days on the scaffold. We wish we could transfer the whole of it to our pages, but the length of it forbids this; we trust, however, the following outline will be acceptable to the readers of the *Advocate*.

Hugh Macleod was born in the parish of Assynt, in the north of Scotland, in the year 1808. His parents maintained a respectable character amongst their acquaintance; their youngest child, the subject of this narrative, was greatly beloved by them, perhaps too much indulged; yet, being actuated by a concern for the spiritual as well as the temporal happiness of their son, they endeavoured to bring him up in the fear of God, and carefully instruct him in the principles of religion.

He was naturally of a gentle and humane disposition. When the blind, and the maimed, and the aged poor sought relief at his father's door, no heart glowed more warmly with sympathy than that of young Hugh. At this time he could not even bear the sight of blood. And even at eighteen years of age, he was so universally regarded as a young man of remarkable steadiness and humanity, that if any had then predicted, that, in four years he would have become a savage murderer, it would have been regarded as utterly impossible.

His progress in iniquity was gradual; he began to cast off the fear of God by little and little, neglecting prayer, and frequenting the company of the vicious, who were generally found about taverns.

“He became soon addicted to swearing, lying, and breaking the Sabbath. The shepherds with whom he lived, very often employed the Sabbath in training their dogs; when their flocks were not properly collected, they gave vent to their anger in horrid outcries; and lies often served to make up amusing stories, which diverted them, as they traversed the hills. He was rapidly going farther and farther downwards: the frequent profanation of the Sabbath diminished daily his sense of religious obligation; while in swearing he sported with the awful name of God, and the terrible threatening of his word; and lying for trifling reasons, was daily weakening his regard for the sacredness of truth. Seeing his companions laugh at the beggars, who sought alms over the country, he became ashamed of those emotions of pity, which were graceful in former days, and by degrees came to join in the rude sport he saw others make of the miseries of life. But while his mind became more callous to the feelings of true kindness, he became still more susceptible of that false thing, which often wears its name. His companions invited him to drink with them, and he could not bear the idea of going away, without giving them a glass in return. Those who sold ardent spirit, received him with open arms, that they might thus get their liquor disposed of; never once shuddering at the idea that their profit was gained, by the ruin of a parent's fond hopes, and the destruction of poor Hugh's body and soul. He began to wish for finer clothes than his station could afford, and when he felt dejected, on account of the inadequacy of his circumstances to meet his increasing ambition; instead of resolutely opposing those sinful feelings, so expressly forbidden in God's word, he indulged them, and drowned in whisky the lowness of spirits which these sometimes brought over him.

“It was about this time, that he heard of people in Coigach, a remote district of Lochbroom, wanting a teacher, and he immediately engaged to go there, without ever asking advice of his parents. His evil propensities acquired prodigious strength, during his resi-

dence there. When men came to drink whisky near his school, they sent for him to join them, which he very willingly did, and before parting treated them in return. Between this, and the purchase of articles of expensive dress, his whole wages were consumed, before he left his charge.

“But the more perplexed he was, the more he plunged into intemperance, whose momentary excitement, made him forget his difficulties. When he was in this situation, he staid at home one Sabbath, against his father's will, because he did not think his shoes good enough to go to public worship, which he used once to attend very willingly. There were two poor women, who lived near his father's cottage, and while they were absent, on this Sabbath, hearing God's word, he took the opportunity of entering their humble dwelling, and having opened their chest with his own key, he took from thence two pound notes. With this he next day paid his debt, and staid from home the rest of the week, until the money was all spent.

“It was his love of idle company, expensive dress, and ardent spirits; which continually plunged him into difficulties. When he found himself unable to pay the debts, he was continually contracting, and that his dissipated habits were destroying his credit, and thus preventing him from gratifying propensities which were always increasing, he sometimes thought of drowning himself: from which he was only deterred, by the awful certainty with which the Scriptures speak, of the eternal perdition of the self-murderer. Deep gloom often rested on him—his peace of mind fled—insatiable passion urged him—his back was turned on the way of life—and the illusive pleasures he pursued left him more miserable. Instead of finding relief by forsaking the ways of sin, and seeking the mercy of his God, he drank deeper in the fatal cup of intoxication, and thought of still more desperate means for getting money.”

It will thus be seen that the *tavern* assisted in preparing this young man for his future career. It was in this place that the religious principles, inculcated by his parents, were eradicated, that the wicked passions which had sprung up in their place were nursed, and the struggles of conscience to reclaim the prodigal were effectually stifled. Oh, when shall the eyes of those who keep such houses be opened, that they may see that they make their houses the common rendezvous of all that is worthless in the community, afford the vicious and abandoned the best possible opportunity for seducing the simple, and expose their own families to imminent risk, by engaging in a business which naturally draws such company around them. When shall legislators see that the *good of the country*, so far from requiring the accommodation of taverns, as is usually pretended, on the contrary demands that they should be closed, and prohibited under the strongest penalties. We are glad to find the following appeal, by the author of the sermon, to those who are engaged in the traffic:—

“I cannot pass from this part of my subject, without, in solemn accents, entreating all who sell intoxicating liquors, to ponder seriously, the detail now set before them. Beware of encouraging drunkenness—beware of welcoming young men to spend what their means cannot afford—beware of promoting dissipated habits—if you wish to avoid being the curse of parents, husbands, wives, and children—if you wish not to eat your bread fearfully mingled with the blood of immortal souls—and if you wish not to have your houses the nurseries of those crimes which pollute our land, and cry to God for vengeance.”

Macleod had now resolved to murder Murdo Grant, a pedlar, who traversed that part of the country, in order to procure the means of extricating himself from debt, and at the same time gratifying his intemperance and prodigality. On the morning of that day on which he had determined to perpetrate this horrid deed, he went into his father's barn, and *prayed*, and immediately after