

CANADA TEMPERANCE ADVOCATE

DEVOTED TO

Total Abstinence, Legal Prohibition, and Social Progress.

Vol. XX.]

MONTREAL, JANUARY 15, 1854.

[No. 2.

Poor Tom ; the Rum-seller's Victim.

Toll ! Toll !
How mournfully the tones rang through the air ; then its musical cadence gently died away until it was still.

No ! all was not still, for a bird was singing without, and the light breath of summer came floating into the room where I lay, and bore its tremulous song to my ear. I arose and looked through the open casement into the latticed porch. The geranium, the rose bush, the vine, and the honeysuckle spreading out their tender leaves obscured the view ; but nevertheless left room for a glimpse into a paradise of a garden, where the flowers were smiling. How peaceful !

After all, is not this a happy world ?

Toll ! Toll !

Again that sound ; but this time its fainting murmurs were caught up and prolonged by another, deeper toned than the first. The inarticulate harmony tells more forcibly than words that "Man goeth to his long home and the mourners go about the streets."—There is a sadness and yet a sweetness in the knell ; a mourning and yet a joy.

Just such a grand requiem as the saints should have ; sorrow for our loss, joy for their triumph. But Oh ! I fear it is not the body of a departed believer that now takes its last journey. O ! to think that when the last trumpet shall sound—Alas ! Alas !

Toll ! Toll !

Go back again to the holy Sabbath. The bells were ringing for church ; the communion of the body and blood of the great Redeemer was to be celebrated ; and the Christian was in his closet confessing his sins, mourning over his hard heart, and anon weeping with wonder at the precious mystery of the cross ; for his thoughts are away in the past, away beyond the seas to that dark mount, the most blessed of all earth's favored spots. Oh ! Calvary, what tears of love have embalmed thy memory.

"Oh ! the sweet wonder of that Cross,
Where God the Saviour lived and died ;
Her noblest life my spirit drains
From his sweet wounds and bleeding side."

While this is transpiring, come with me, enter a sick chamber. A bloated form lies before you ; the eyes glare wildly round as he wakes from a stupid slumber, and a sepulchral voice breaks the silence, "Where is my bottle ?"

"Tom," replies a middle-aged man sitting by the bedside, (it was kindly but firmly spoken ;) "Tom, you have drank all that was in the bottle ; and you should'nt have had that, if I had not been afraid you would sink before your medicine could act."

"I want my bottle, I tell you. I will have it. I'll get up out of this bed and go into town, and get some for myself. If I don't, —" He rose up in his bed but his strength was too far gone. He fell back in a fainting fit. Another scene on the same Sabbath day. It is the house of God. Before the pulpit there is set on the table the elemental bread and wine, decently covered with a cloth of spotless white. It is not now, as in the morning service, the fair Caucasian, but the sable African who sits and listens to the oracles of Divine truth. The son of Japhet tells the sons of Ham, of a common Saviour, of a crown of immortal glory, of a death that shall never die.

A few hours later. Day dies in the West ; the crimson and gold and blue that overhang earth, our great tabernacle in the wilderness, where even yet the Shekinah sometimes appears—are fading into a sombre pall, as though this abiding place of ours were, as it is indeed, one vast charnel house. Knock ! Knock ! Death is at the door.

"Lift me up," says the dying man.

"Tom, you can't stand it ; you are too weak."

"Lift me up," says he sternly to a servant. The servant takes hold of his hands and rises him a little. He tries to rise still further ; but the effort is too much for him ; he sinks back in his last swoon, draws two or three breaths—and he is dead !

Toll ! Toll !

A group of idlers were standing on the corner of the street, when presently there came into view a slow procession. Reader, will you, or your father, or your brother, or your son, ever lead such a procession ?

"Poor Tom !" said one of the company on the sidewalk. The speaker was plump and rubicund, with a heavy gold fob chain, and an embroidered cravat daintily tied around his broad neck.

"Poor Tom ! he was a good clever fellow when he wasn't drunk. My Sam was out at the house this morning, and went in and took a look at the corpse. He said a black woman was standing at the head of the lounge, when he lifted up the coverlid from Tom's face.—She looked monstrous solemn, and when Sam laid back the coverlid, she took hold of his hand and said, 'Poor massa Tom is gone ;' and then the tears came trickling down her face, and she cried as though she would break her heart. Boys ! you know Tom was mighty good to his niggers when he was sober, but he was like a very devil when he was drunk."

A man who was passing by, paused on hearing these words, and said to the speaker :

"Mr. Jones, I believe he died from the effects of liquor, did he not ?"

"So I'm told," was the reply.