

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 discountenance their use throughout the community.

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George Elton; or Town and Country.

George Elton was born, educated, and served his apprenticeship in the small town of Denbrock. When the temperance movement reached that part of the country, he eagerly embraced its principles, and became the type of a class, whose faculties it has drawn into exercise and rewarded by their development. He was for several years secretary of the Denbrock Total Abstinence Society, a Sabbath school teacher and tract lender. In short, a person ready for any good work. An individual of his excellent character, abilities, and address, soon procured, in a large manufacturing town in the neighbourhood, a much better situation than Denbrock could offer to him. There George Elton found that abstinence was by no means in that ascendant which the boasted intelligence of large towns led him to expect. In the circle into which he had been cast, he, indeed, met with none of that rude and violent opposition which he had been accustomed to in the country. All understood, and many were ready to admit, the claims of the abstinence movement; but to them it was only one of the thousand good objects which existed—one star in a densely-studded sky, whilst to George it had been a planet, and one of no ordinary brightness—a Lucifer, son of the morning. But the absence of censure was joined to the absence of praise. Indeed, if there was any thing on which they could be said to have decided opinions, it was to have no strong views at all. It was deemed the part of a philosopher to adjust the interest felt in any one subject upon a scale allowing a just proportion to every other subject with which he was conversant, or in which he felt interested. To use a comparison, human affection was viewed more as a solid, whose weight or bulk no human skill could increase or elongate, and which, consequently, could only be divided among all righteous claimants in due proportions, than as a liquid or gaseous body capable of indefinite expansion. It may be upon the same principle that the Hindoo, as he rises to absorption in deity, loses even the homeopathic amount of interest in human affairs which George's friends felt, or theirs may be the first step towards that higher state. However that may be, special interest in any one subject was viewed as the sign of limited knowledge, or a limited circle of acquaintances. Enthusiasm and ignorance were synonyms. To retain credit for the absence of the one, the other must be wanting. We need not say that George was influenced by the opinions and character of his new companions—all men are. These operate like the malaria of disease, silently and often unnoticed, but surely. Had he been tempted openly to abandon his temperance principles, he would have resisted nobly and manfully; but gentlemanly bearing and the assumption of superior knowledge were precisely the media by which he could most easily be injured, and by which not a few in similar circumstances have been ruined.

For a time, however, he attended the temperance meetings; but under the influence of the opinions that we have

referred to, gradually withdrew. Let us do him justice. We believe, had there been no one but himself in L., he would not have abandoned abstinence. No one doubted his decision on that head, or attempted to seduce him from it.

But his example only was given. The influence of argument and effort were entirely withdrawn before he was a year in L. About this time, in turn with his shop-mates, he received permission to spend a week in the country, and in due time arrived at his native town.

If the first appearance of a young man from the country in a town exhibits him in a less favourable light than his true character would justify, his return after a time to his native place with the habits, tone, and manners of the town, operate in the opposite way. He becomes a prodigy. George bore the trial well; cast off as much of the town as he could, and appeared as nearly as possible among his old friends in his old character, and was welcomed everywhere; but by none more than by his good, shrewd old maiden Aunt Burroughs. With her he had always been a special favourite. From his earliest day, he had lived rather more with her than at home. They embarked in the temperance cause together; and to say the truth (privately though), the abstinence society of Denbrock owed not less to Aunt Burroughs than to George Elton, as many other good causes do to similar characters who are little heard of often, but whose influence is none the less real and beneficial. George was just what she had expected to find him. Altered, indeed, but all for the better. Without any affectation, and even with more modesty and kind attention to the comfort of others, than he had always exhibited before he left home. After the various family topics had been exhausted between them, the abstinence movement came in, as a matter of course, for remark. 'I need not ask,' she said, 'if you are still holding by the good cause; but how do matters get on in L.?'

'There is,' said George, 'a good deal of bustle, many meetings, lectures, soirees, etc., and I hope there is progress making. The only change on myself is a little more sobriety in the advocacy of the cause.'

'Eh,' said she, smiling, and peering over her spectacles, 'that means, I suppose, that you don't beat upon the table so much now when you make speeches, as you did in Denbrock.'

'Well,' said George, 'I dare say I should not do damage in that way so much as I once did, if I were to speak in the hall again.'

'Are the meetings well attended in L., and do you speak often at them?' asked his aunt.

'I believe the meetings are tolerably attended,' said George; 'but I have never spoken at one of them, and not been very often at them of late.'

'But how happens that?' she said seriously, and taking off her spectacles. 'Perhaps your business hours do not allow you to attend?'