

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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The Maniac.

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My heart shudders as I think of her—once loved, and beautiful, and pious, now blighted, withered, frenzied, lost. Once a gay and bright maiden; then a subdued and devoted Christian, a wife, a mother; and then a sufferer, a criminal, a maniac. She passed through all these phases so suddenly, and hastened so quickly from the brightest joys to the deepest gloom of despair, that I wondered at the rapid transition; and often have I involuntarily prayed for the poor unfortunate Louisa H., as my mind recurred to her sad history.

Though now an inmate of our state asylum for the insane, I will not intrude upon the sanctity of the family circle if I detail some of the fearful steps of her brief career. Poor Louisa! she has had but little peace or rest since her entrance in this world of sin and sorrow, and probably enjoys as much now in the hallucinations of delirium as she did when her too sensitive soul dwelt upon the unmitigated horrors of real life. Such it was to her. No flowers for years grew in her path, no joy thrilled her soul, no friendship relieved her wants. The public eye knew not, pitted not her condition, till a tragedy—a fearful tragedy—roused the people, and then Louisa was a maniac. True, she once gathered flowers in the wild woods; she once gambled on the lawn, and sang responses merrily to the birds she loved. But when she entered life as an individual, she found her path a thorny one. O, could we get the true story of that wandering spirit pent up in its prison house of clay, and madly looking out on a hated world, we would hear a story that fiction never surpassed—a tale of wrong and blood, of crushed hopes and reckless brutality, of unmitigated wretchedness and wild blasphemy, of savage rage and proud defiance, of exquisite revenge and terrible retribution such as earth only can produce and hell only excite! Through *testaments* of despair poor Louisa walks; but we hope, we pray, that God would pity, and pardon, and save, and that the wanderer may return to rest when life gives place to immortality.

I may here give the key that unlocks the mystery hanging around the haggard form of the subject of this sketch—*her father was a common drunkard*. He was an important character in the village near which he lived, and was the most noted fighter of the county of R. in his day. Half drunk, he was a host in his way, and would quarrel, and swear, and raise fights, and, being a most expert pugilist, would engage in them with evident gusto and hence was universally respected (?) and dreaded. He was the hero of every patriotic row, and the soul of every training-day's entertainment. Politicians were ready to court his favor, and his notorious powers made him the object of village gossip for days after elections. The common rendezvous of bacchanals—the village dram-shop—was never fairly graced, and never attractive to the patriotic posterity of revolutionary sires, till the fiery H. had arrived.

Wille, however, the rum-seller, and the grovelling office-seeker, and the town loafer, and the county bully, all rejoiced in the friendship of this profane drunken blackguard, they forgot the place where his meek wife and lovely daughter lived and suffered. When sober he was kind, industrious, and frugal, and made a good living, as it was said. But when drunk he was a demon incarnate; and going home in a fury, he would beat his wife, abuse his children, and perform all other acts and deeds which common drunkards do in such cases.

A change took place, which for a while turned the current of affairs, and altered somewhat the hitherto unvarying misery of H.'s family. The Methodists had a small society at R., and at a quarterly meeting some years ago, a great revival took place. Scores of sinners of all classes were brought into the Church, and converted to God. It was one of these revivals which make a marked impression on society. The very foundations of the wicked were torn from under them, and for many days there was weeping, praying, shouting in the now changed and happy R. The adjacent country partook of the heavenly blessing, and flocked to the mercy seat, and many, very many, were made happy in a Saviour's love.—Among the converts were H and his family. He professed to experience the pardoning favor of God; his wife, too, bowed to Jesus with her loved husband; and in humble contrition they forgot all their troubles, and sought only to glorify God. Louisa was converted. Now she was happy. She seemed to be in a new world. Old things had passed away—all things had become new—a new father, a new mother, a new home, and a new heart. No wonder she shouted, as she often did, when she told in class or in love-feast the simple story of her salvation. She was a beautiful girl. Her temper subdued by grace, her soul kindled into raptures, her voice raised in song, she presented a fair picture. He who was her pastor then told the writer, that a more lovely and interesting girl did not belong to the Church at that time than this rejoicing young convert. Her sweet voice was frequently heard in prayer in the public congregation; and many predicted a happy future for the unfortunate girl.

The family altar was erected in the reformed drunkard's house; a family Bible was purchased; and a few halcyon days passed over the cottage dwellers. The itinerant minister visited and prayed with the happy circle, and everything seemed to indicate a thorough reformation of the courageous and passionate H.

Half a year had gone since this great change was wrought, and still the skies over Louisa were bright; but clouds were gathering, and soon the green, beautiful world in which she dwelt was to be blackened, scorched, blighted, and she a wandering, lost one, to be raving amid its curses.

I would be glad to stop here, and leave that family in the enjoyment of hope, and peace, and pardon; but I feel that the truth ought to be told in this case, and sorrowfully I proceed to my task.

H. had long shunned the dram-shop. No inducement had been sufficient to lead to the fatal stall where cruel men murder souls as well as bodies. He became strong in his self-confidence, after months of trial; and at last yielded so far the rigid determination of his mind as to go for some trifling article to the deathful den of Beelzebub's hated minion. He went too far. He went to the charmed circle; he went from the guardian angel which kept him; he dragged himself from under the shadow of the Almighty's wings, and fell within the black baleful shade of Erebus; he went to the gates of perdition; he went to the mouth of the pit; he climbed to the burning crater's edge; he made a truce with his arch enemy, and forgot that he was a Christian; he took one dram—only one—only one cup from the demon's hands—only one cup of burning poison—one lethean draught—one long draught of liquid woe and death; he was ruined, murdered, damned.

I need say no more about his downward course. He went from home in the morning a kind, Christian father; he came to that home at night a fool, a brute, a fiend. The change in Eden was scarcely greater. The transition was so violent that poor Louisa