

THE CANADA TEMPERANCE ADVOCATE.

TEMPERANCE IS THE MODERATE USE OF THINGS BENEFICIAL, AND ABSTINENCE FROM THINGS HURTFUL.

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Selected Articles.

Seed-Time and Harvest; or, Bob Jenkin's account of his own self.

One evening, my mother and sister had been busily engaged, as usual, in such house-wifery as might best contribute to keep our poor wreck of a domicile together as long as possible. I had learned to write a fair hand, and was engaged in copying some papers for our squire, who paid me by the sheet. It had gotten to be nearly ten o'clock. My mother put on her spectacles, and, opening the Bible, began to read. Rachal and I sat by the fire, listening to the words of truth and soberness. My poor mother had fallen upon a portion of Scripture, which, from its applicability to her own situation, and that of her children, had affected her feelings, and the tears were in her eyes, when the loud tramp upon the door-step announced the return of my father. His whole appearance was unusually ominous of evil. My mother stirred the fire, and I placed him a chair, which he kicked over, and threw himself down upon the bed and called for supper. Mother told him in a gentle manner that there was nothing in the house but some bread.—He told her she lied, and swore terribly. She sat silently by the fire: I looked up in her face: she wept, but said nothing. “Don't cry so, dear mother,” said Rachal. “Wife,” said my father, sitting upon the edge of the bed, “when will you leave off crying?” “Whenever you leave off drinking, husband,” replied my mother, in the kindest manner. My father sprung up in a hurricane of wrath, and with a dreadful oath, hurled a chair at my mother's head. I sprang forward, and received its full force upon my shoulder. Rachal and my mother fled to a neighbor's house—and my father struck me several blows with his feet and fists: and, as I made my escape, I left him dashing the furniture to pieces, with the fury of a madman. I rushed forth to seek shelter amid the driving storm, from the tempest of a drunken father's wrath. I went as speedily as possible, to the squire's house, and begged him to take compassion on my poor mother and sister.

Having received his promise that he would go to my father's cottage, and passed a com-

fortless night in the farmer's barn, I fled in the morning to a neighbouring city, and entered the life of a sailor, in which I continued, in foreign ports, five years, saving all my hard earnings, and occasionally transmitting relief to my honored mother. The first intelligence I received of home, was from Tom Johnson, an old acquaintance, whom I accidentally met in London.

“Why, Bob,” said Tom, “I'm heartily glad to see you, my lad; so you've taken leg bail 'of the old folks, and turned rover in good earnest, ey?” I told him, I hoped he didn't think I'd left my old mother to shirk for herself, in her old age. “Not a jot,” replied the old sailor; “Squire Seeley has told me the whole story, and says he has put the sweat of your brow, more than once or twice aither, into the old lady's hand, and made her old weather-beaten heart leap for joy, to hear you was so riotful a lad. I saw your mother about a year ago, and your sister Rachal.” I shook old Tom Johnson by the hand.—I could not retain my feelings, for this was the first news I had heard from home, for more than five years. “Come, Bob,” said the old fellow, “don't be for opening your scuppers and making crooked faces; though it blows hard enough now, it may get to be calm weather after all.” “How is my father doing now?” I enquired. “Why, as to that,” answered Tom Johnson, “it's about a twelve month since I was there. I told the old lady I might cross your hawser in some part of the world. She has a rough time of it, my boy. The old man holds on to mischief, like a heavy keedge in a clay bottom. The cold-water folks began, about a year ago, to scatter their seed in the village, in the shape of tracts, and newspapers. Some of them were thrown at your father's door, and at the door of old Deacon Flint, the distiller. There, as you may suppose, the seed fell in stony places. Your father was in a great rage, and swore he'd shoot the first person that left another of their rascally publications before the door. I'm afraid it will be a long while, my lad, before the temperance folks get the weather-gage of the rum-sellers and rum-drinkers in our village. They had a miserable seed-time, and the devil and Deacon Flint, I am afraid, will have the best of the harvest.”

Soon after this, at the end of five years.

I directed my course towards home. I arrived on the shores of my native country, and with feelings of a painful and perplexing character, sought the dwelling of my parents. When I had reached the village adjoining my own, I saw at the door of a grocery the individual at whose shop my father had purchased his rum. Although I regarded him as the destroyer of my father, I could not repress my desire to obtain from him some knowledge of my family.

His manners were those of a surly and dissatisfied man. In reply to my inquiries, he informed me that my parents and my sister were alive, and added with a sneer, that my father had set up for a cold-water man, “but,” continued he with a forced and spiteful laugh, “it will take him all his days, I guess, to put off the old man: they that have got the relish of my rum, are not so very apt to change it for cold water.” Upon farther inquiry, I ascertained that there had been a temperance movement in our village; and that the seed, as poor Tom Johnson said, had been scattered there with an unsparing hand. I also gathered the information from this rum-seller, that the selectmen had refused to appropriate any applicant for a license to sell ardent spirit in our village; and that he, himself, had therefore been obliged to quit his old stand, and take this new one, which he now occupied.

I turned from the dram-seller, and proceeded to the old cottage, which I reached late in the evening.

A light was still gleaming forth from the window. I drew slowly and silently near to the door.—I thought I heard a voice. I listened attentively. It was my father's.—My mother appeared not to reply: such was her constant habit, whenever, under the influence of liquor, he gave a loose rein to his tongue, and indulged in unkind and abusive language. I drew still nearer, and, passing softly into the entry, I listened more attentively at the inner door. Can it be possible! thought I. He was engaged in prayer! in fervent and pious prayer! He prayed, with a trembling voice, for the restoration of an absent son! There was a pause. From the movement within, it was evident that they had risen from their knees. I gently raised the latch, and opened the door. The father, the mother, the brother, the sister,