

Temperance.

STATISTICS AND SKETCHES.

THE BROKEN-HEARTED WIFE AND MOTHER.

A short time since, as I was passing a sabbath in a country town, in the interior of this commonwealth, I was requested to visit a dying woman. The first aspect of the house to which I was led, in its louse clapboards, broken windows, and decayed fences, told me too plainly that I was approaching the home of a drunkard. The apartment in which the dying woman was breathing her last, was one whose aspect of cheerlessness and discomfort made my heart ache. A few wretched articles of furniture were scattered about the room, and upon a low bed, in one corner, most scantily furnished, lay the wasted form of the dying mother. Her countenance bore traces of intelligence, of refinement, and yet of the most overwhelming mental anguish. Her husband stood at the head of the bed, with an expression of as deep anguish as could be crowded into the features of a blotted inebriate. Five little children stood around the bedside, loudly sobbing; the eldest, a daughter not twelve years of age, kneeling by her mother's side, and almost convulsively clasping her hand as she drenched it with tears. It was one of those scenes of woe which at once paints itself upon the eye and imprints itself upon the mind, never, never, to be effaced. From the few almost inarticulate sounds of the dying woman, I gathered that all the anguish of the mother's heart was in fevered excitement, as she was to leave her poor children, her tender boys and girls, in this world of temptation, with no guide but their besotted, drunken father.

She was already breathing her last as I entered the room—and in a short time her struggling, broken, grief-rent heart was still in death. I inquired into the circumstances of the case, and found that a few years before, this woman, then a young lady of many accomplishments of person and of mind, was married to her husband, then a young merchant. The sun of present and prospective joy, beamed brightly on the morning of their nuptials. Everything was cheerful and tasteful in the happy home where their youthful affections were first cemented. A few years of untroubled prosperity glided swiftly away. Behind the counter of this young man's store were arranged several puncheons of ardent spirits for retail. In selling to others he tasted himself. Gradually he acquired the appetite for strong drink, and in the lapse of a few years he scattered all his property, ruined his reputation, beggared his family, and became himself a ragged vagabond in the streets. He was naturally amiable and affectionate, compliant and yielding,—and having in his nature but little of that sterner material which is called decision, when temptation came he fell at once.

In such persons it is not unfrequently the case, that intoxication produces perfect phrenzy. A few glasses would perfectly craze him, and he would return to his home at night a raging, tearing maniac. He would take the whole range of the house in his fury, and wife and children were compelled to fly, wounded and bleeding, from his terrible violence. Often would she gather her little flock of children in the corner behind her, and receive upon her own person the fearful blows which their brutal and crazed father was dealing around him.

"Oh, who can tell what days, what nights she spent
Of tideless, waveless, sailless, shoreless woe."

In the morning, this wretched victim of rum would awake from his debauch, and restored to his natural affection, would reflect upon his brutality with horror and remorse.

He would fall upon his knees before his wife, with tears of anguish rolling down his cheeks, and implore her forgiveness—he would call himself a brute and a fiend—he would resolve and re-resolve never to drink again. For a few days he would succeed in keeping his promise, and himself away from temptation. But the acquired habit would gather strength. Associates would lure him into the village store,—the sight of the decanters, the fumes of the spirits, would sweep away with hurricane fury all his resolutions. One glass would follow another in the desperation of remorse and despair.

Frenzied with the fiend-creating poison, he would return to his home and re-enact those scenes of outrage, the bare imagination of which makes humanity shudder. Again and again his wife, in her wretchedness, went to the village groceries, and with all the eloquence of a despairing and heart-broken mother, implore them not to sell her husband rum. She would show them her own wounds,—she would lead her poor famished and half-starved children to them, and tell them the awful stories of her woes. But a toper seems to be pleased to see his fellow-toper drunk. The sale of ardent spirits was free in this village, and there was no such thing as keeping it from one who had not mental resolution of his own to resist the temptation. Misery is slow and cruel—but it gnawed with a vulture tooth at the heart of this much injured woman, till exhausted nature sank and expired. Where that wretched father now is—whether in the grave, the almshouse, or the state prison—I know not; where those children are, I know not—but they are scattered probably amid the melancholy ruins of a tempestuous world.—*Western Temperance Journal.*

INWARD WOUNDS.—Infuse yarrow twelve hours in warm water—taken a cup of this four times a day.

INTEMPERANCE.—Milk is said to be an efficient cure for the thirst created by intemperance.