

# THE CANADA TEMPERANCE ADVOCATE,

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## A THRILLING SCENE, ILLUSTRATING TEMPERATE DRINKING.

Permit me to illustrate my views of temperate drinking, by relating substantially a thrilling scene, which occurred in a town in a neighbouring state, while the people were gathered together to discuss the merits of the license question, and decide informally, whether neighbors should any longer be permitted to destroy each other by vending alcoholic poisons.

The town had suffered greatly from the sale and use of intoxicating liquors. The leading influences were opposed to total abstinence. At the meeting, the Clergyman, the Deacon, and the Physician, were present, and were all in favor of continuing the custom of license—all in favor of permitting a few men of high moral character to sell alcohol—for they all agreed in the opinion, that alcohol in moderation, when used as a beverage, was a good creature of God; and also, to restrict the sale or moderate use, was an unjust interference with human liberty, and a reflection upon the benevolence of the Almighty. They all united in the belief, that in the use of alcohol as a beverage, *excess alone* was to be avoided.

The feeling appeared to be all one way, when a single tee-totaller, who was present by accident, but who had been a former resident of the town, begged leave to differ from the speakers who had preceded him. He entered into a history of the village from its early settlement; he called the attention of the assembly to the desolation temperate drinking had brought upon families and individuals; he pointed to the poorhouse, the prison house, and the graveyard, for its numerous victims; he urged the people by every consideration of mercy, to let down the flood gates, and prevent, as far as possible, the continued desolation of families, by the moderate use of alcohol. But all would rot do. The arguments of the clergyman, the deacon, and the physician, backed by station, learning and influence, were too much for the single tee-totaller. No one arose to continue the discussion, or support him, and the President of the meeting was about to put the question—when all at once there arose from one corner of the room, a miserable female. She was thinly clad, and her appearance indicated the utmost wretchedness, and that her mortal career was almost closed. After a moment of silence, and all eyes being fixed upon her, she stretched her attenuated body to its utmost height, then her long arms to their greatest length, and raising her voice to a shrill pitch, she called upon all to look upon her. "Yes!" she said, "look upon me, and then hear me. All that the last speaker has said relative to temperate drinking, as being the father of all drunkenness, is true. All practice, all experience, declares its truth. All drinking of alcoholic poison, as a beverage in health, is *excess*. Look upon me. You all know me, or once did. You all know I was once the mistress of the best farm in this town. You all know, too, I once had one of the best—the most devoted of husbands. You all know I had five noble hearted, industrious boys. Where are they now? Doctor, where are they now? You all know.—You all know they lie in a row, side by side, in yonder church-yard; all—every one of them—filling the drunkard's grave! They were all taught to believe that temperate drinking was safe.—*excess alone* ought to be avoided;

and they never acknowledged excess. They quoted you, and you, and you, pointing with her shred of a finger to the Priest, Deacon and Doctor, as authority. They thought themselves safe under such teachers. But I saw the gradual change coming over my family and prospects with dismay and horror; I felt we were all to be overwhelmed in one common ruin; I tried to ward off the blow; I tried to break the spell—the delusive spell—in which the idea of the benefits of temperate drinking had involved my husband and sons; I begged, I prayed, but the odds were greatly against me. The Priest said the poison that was *destroying* my husband and boys was a good creature of God; the Deacon (who sits under the pulpit there, and took our farm to pay his rum bills,) sold them the poison; the Physician said that a little was good, and *excess* ought to be avoided. My poor husband and my dear boys fell into the snare, and they could not escape, (there were no Washingtonians then,) and one after another was conveyed to the dishonored grave of the drunkard. Now look at me again—you probably see me for the last time—my sand has almost run.—I have dragged my exhausted frame from my present abode—*your poor-house*—to warn you *all*—to warn you, Deacon!—to warn you, false teacher of God's word"—and with her arms high flung, and her tall form stretched to its utmost, and her voice raised to an unearthly pitch—she exclaimed, "I shall soon stand before the judgment seat of God—I shall meet you there, you false guides, and be a swift witness against you all." The miserable female vanished—a dead silence pervaded the assembly—the Priest, Deacon and Physician hung their heads—the President of the meeting put the question—shall we have any more licenses to sell alcoholic poisons, to be sold as a beverage? The response was unanimous—No! People of the United States, friends of humanity every where, what would have been your verdict had you all been there also?

This picture may be thought to be overdrawn, but could the history of families be told in *this city*, in all of our towns and villages, or in our hamlets, *tens of thousands* of cases equally striking might be recorded here.

I was once a moderate drinker, but now, thanks to the temperance reform, a Tee-totaller.—*Albany Atlas*.

## PROGRESS OF THE CAUSE.

LONDON, March 21.—I beg to assure you of the high estimation in which the London Temperance Society hold the services of the Montreal Temperance Society. They rejoice with you in the signal success which God has graciously vouchsafed to your self denying and persevering efforts—a success which, in several parts of this vicinity, has proved introductory to the possession and extension of vital godliness. Our Treasurer's account shows a balance of four pounds ten shillings, which is here enclosed, to assist the general operations of the Montreal Temperance Society. It would have given the Society much pleasure to have shown you a much better proof of our sympathy in your present difficulties, but, probably, in no part of the Province is the effect of the *hard times* more seriously felt than in this vicinity.—W. CLARKE.

LONDON, March 22.—Together with the £4 10s., mentioned in the above, I send you the additional sum of £4 10s., by order of the Committee, which sums were collected for the purpose of procuring a library, a plan which has been abandoned for the present.—F. TALBOT.