

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 Bottle.—Chapter V.

Poor little Lotty! Once a loving, beautiful and happy child—now wan and wasted, and with a face so full of sadness and suffering, that those who gave to the sick mother for the sake of the sick babe in her arms, felt sometimes unhappy for days, as the image of the child arose up to haunt them.

No one seemed to care much for Lotty, but Agnes; and when she came in at night with the money she had picked up through the day, she always took the child in her arms; and it would lay its emaciated face down upon her breast, and look up at her with its large, glistening eyes, and not move them for minutes and minutes at a time. Agnes loved her little sister more and more tenderly, as the wasting disease at its vitals, went deeper and deeper; and she often pleaded for it to be left at home. But no—Lotty must go out every day; in cold or heat; in rain or sunshine. Agnes did not understand that it was the pale, thin face of her little sister that brought her mother so many sixpences and shillings, while she was rarely able to get more than a penny at a time; nor did she know that the brutalized mind of her depraved mother, was pleased rather than distressed, as she saw the face of Lotty exhibiting deeper and deeper marks of suffering, for these gave her a more certain hold upon the sympathies of those to whom she appealed for charity.

Shocking as this is to think of, it was yet too true. Agnes often begged to have the doctor sent for; but the mother was content to get medicine without advice, from patent nostrum sellers, who too often recommend any thing for the sake of the money, and often as certainly destroy health and life as the rumseller himself. Many, many nauseous doses were forced down the reluctant throat of the poor child by the passionate mother; and many were the blows it received because its weak stomach made it turn from, and with cries, resist the cruel infliction. And all that it took was poison to its weak body; for it excited the disease and made it incurable.

One morning—the sleepless child had moaned all night in pain—the mother rose from her hard mattress, thrown upon the floor, and after preparing some breakfast, ordered Agnes and James, who were crouching by the few sticks that blazed feebly upon the hearth, to go out to their day's employment—begging. Lotty was in the arms of Agnes, and her face lay close against her sister's bosom. She was breathing quick and gaspingly, and with every breath, uttered a low moan.

"What shall I do with Lotty?" asked Agnes.

"Put her down on the bed there," replied the mother, in a fretful, impatient voice, while the child shrunk closer to her sister.

"She is very sick, mother," said Agnes.

"She's no more than she was yesterday. So put her down. You just want to sit there, idling your time. Put her down, I tell you."

The child began to cry as Agnes arose and went towards the mattress that lay upon the floor.

"Stop that crying!" exclaimed the father, angrily. He sat smoking his pipe by the fire-place, his feet upon the mantle.

But Lotty cried on, though feebly.

"Stop, I say!" And the brutal man took his feet down, and turned half round to give force to his words, by a threatening look.

"Aint you going to hush up there?" As he said this, Latimer started up and went toward the grieving little one.

"Oh, father!" exclaimed Agnes, moving between him and the bed upon which Lotty lay,—“Don't whip her. Indeed she's very sick this morning. There Lotty!” she added, in a soothing voice, turning towards her sister,—“there dear, don't cry!”

This interference only made Latimer more angry. Seizing Agnes by the arm, he threw her with violence against the side of the room, cursing her bitterly as he did so; and then stooping over the shadowy form of the still fretting child, struck it two or three stunning blows. It ceased crying. He again took his seat by the fire-place, and turned his back upon his family.

Agnes went out weeping, to renew for another day, her miserable employment. But the low moan of little Lotty was in her ears, and she heard it, as she stole along the crowded streets, above the rattling of wheels and discord of many voices. For the very sadness of her young face, many stopped and gave their pittance, who would otherwise have passed on.

When Mrs. Latimer was ready to go out with Lotty, and went to take her up, she found her in a kind of stupor—merely asleep she thought. But it was the blessed prelude to a sweeter sleep than the little sufferer had ever known.

Wrapping up the light form, and lifting it as if the weight were little more than the weight of so much down, the mother went forth again—but with a dying child in her arms. At one of the corners in the city, past which the onward passing crowd of men and women flowed in one continuous wave, she sat down, and exposed the death-stricken face of her youngest born. The mother's eyes were too dim to perceive the signs that were not mistaken by others.

"Take that child home, good woman! It is dying!" said one.

"That child is too sick to be exposed on a day like this," said another.

And words of similar import were repeated over and over again, but the mother saw nothing more than she had seen for weeks. Sometimes a little crowd would gather around her, attracted by the ghastly look of the unconscious one that lay in her arms, and many hearts being touched by the spectacle of misery, many hands tendered the alms she sought.

At last, the mother was aroused by the startling exclamation—

Mrs. Latimer