

THE CANADA TEMPERANCE ADVOCATE,

DEVOTED TO

TEMPERANCE, EDUCATION, AGRICULTURE AND NEWS.

VOL. XI.

APRIL 15, 1845.

No. 8.

Dangers of Dining Out.

BY MRS. ELLIS.

(Concluded from Page 103.)

"In one of these moods, you may perhaps remember the day I went with you to church; feeling I know not how, like a sort of marked man, as if all eyes were upon me. I was, however, somewhat lulled by the deep melancholy music of the organ, and had begun to feel a sort of calm steal over my spirits, when suddenly my attention was directed towards Sir James Morsford's seat; and there were the four children dressed in their deep mourning, and the servants in mourning too; but no governess nor any one with them, but those very domestics, against whose tender mercies their poor mother had so earnestly entreated me to protect them. What could I do? I returned home early, on some pretence of professional duty, and, for that day, and the next, was lost to myself and every one besides."

The narrative of Frederick Bond had been strictly correct so far as related to the state of his own feelings. How far he was justified in believing that his wife could actually have saved him from the gulf into which he was plunging, must in this, as in many other cases, remain a matter of doubt. It is, however, an almost invariable rule with those to whom intemperance has become the prevailing malady of their lives, when they take a retrospective view of their own conduct, to assert, and probably to believe, that some other mode of behaviour on the part of those with whom they were associated, could have rescued them from final and irretrievable ruin. It is, perhaps, not often that men complain of their wives for keeping silence in such cases. Speaking too much, or rather with too little regard to fitness of time and manner, is a far more frequent cause of offence.

From this error Eleanor Bond was singularly exempt, but her punishment was not the less, that her fault consisted in an opposite extreme of conduct. She, too, could have told her story of the last five years; but her altered countenance spoke for her—and in that, what a history was written! Gradual had been the falling away, of herself, her family, and of one she loved better than herself, from that high station in the world's esteem, which she had prized above all earthly possessions. Her husband had passed that line of demarcation which the world appoints for the boundary between what it sanctions and what it condemns; and consequently, first one friend had forsaken him, and then another, and a sort of stigma had become attached to his character, while his old companions congratulated themselves upon their safety—just within that line, from whence they could laugh at his downfall, and despise his shame.

Eleanor was keenly alive to the injustice and the injury which her husband suffered from those who had once been most solicitous to cultivate his friendship; but she had also deeper cause for suffering than any which this world alone could inflict. She had rejected the counsels of the only friend who had ever evinced a real interest in her eternal happiness; she had resisted the warnings of her own conscience; and she seemed to be sinking deeper and deeper into a state of perplexity and distress, from which no human aid could save her. She had been vain in her ambition, and misguided in her judgment; but she was not hardened against conviction, nor obstinate in her adherence to preconceived opinions. Her father's death, which occurred soon after the partnership between her husband and Mr. West had been dissolved, while it placed in her possession a sum of money barely sufficient to secure herself and her children from absolute want, was an event which had considerable effect in changing the state of her heart with regard to her temporal and spiritual views; and thus she had become gradually an altered character, learning, in the school of affliction, those important lessons which prosperity and indulgence had utterly failed to teach.

It was chiefly at her desire, for her husband was becoming reckless of every thing, that they had left their native place, and

settled in a small country village, where they had been informed by Mr. West there was an opening for a professional man; though certainly the practice which this place afforded, was of a very humble and limited kind, when compared with what Frederick Bond in his happier days had been qualified to undertake.

In a picturesque but humble cottage, situated in the outskirts of this village, they fixed their abode, living in the utmost simplicity, and yet endeavouring to cultivate the respect and good will of those around them, by making the best appearance their fallen fortunes would allow.

It could have been an easy matter for Frederick to have secured to himself the entire practice of this village and its neighbourhood; but here again fresh trials awaited his wife, who had the mortification of seeing that first one, and then another of the best families around them, were becoming acquainted with her husband's habits, and consequently calling in other medical assistance; so that, in the course of little more than one year, none but the paupers of the parish were left to his skill or his attention.

Eleanor had fondly hoped, that, surrounded by new scenes, and influenced by different associations, her husband would be induced from all he had felt and suffered, to begin his life afresh, and to let this change in his circumstances be the commencement of better hopes and brighter prospects for the future. She had prepared herself, and was endeavouring to prepare her children, for the sacrifice of every pecuniary indulgence. She had already borne the loss of friends, and the altered aspect of society towards herself and her husband; but the principle of hope, still strong within her breast, now pointed to what was more essentially desirable, and she persuaded herself that, deprived of so much of earthly consolation, her husband would now seek the more earnestly to lay hold of that which the world would not be able to take away. What foundation she had for this hope, it would have been difficult to say, except that she prayed fervently that it might be realized; and while the object of her anxiety cared not to pray for himself, she ceased not from her earnest supplications that he might yet be saved, even though it might seem to be in spite of himself.

In the mean time, Frederick Bond was fast losing the power of resistance against evil. His nerves, as he had described them, were indeed shattered, and his imagination was almost always filled with phantoms of horror, with spectres which he sought to subdue by the very means which called them into life. By such means, however, he was enabled to purchase occasional seasons of forgetfulness, and, what was worse than all to his wife, he purchased also a kind of false and unnatural excitement; under the influence of which, his puerile jests, his aimless tricks, his vague and heartless merriment, were more difficult to witness with patience and forbearance, than even the gross sleep, and mere animal existence, which occupied the greater portion of his time.

It would have appeared to a stranger, a task of difficult attainment to love such a man; but well has it been said, that "*love is strong as death*;" and well has it been proved by the experience of woman, that love can survive the death of pride—of confidence—of hope—of all, in short, which in its earlier stages of existence, either combined in its creation, or administered to its support.

The hopes of Eleanor Bond had been reduced to their lowest state, before the conversation took place which we have described. But now a new light seemed to burst upon her, for her husband had, of his own accord, made allusion to the subject that was ever present to her thoughts. Her heart was consequently open; and like some captive, whose heavy chains are just broken, she believed that happiness, solid, substantial happiness, would inevitably ensue. What was her disappointment, then, to find, that though her husband would not unfrequently shed tears at the recital of her anxiety and suffering on his behalf, he had in reality lost the power of feeling any thing acutely, or of entering with continued interest, even upon the most important concerns of life. He fully agreed with her in all her reasonings, he listened to all