

Sports.

What's the matter with the Base Ball club. Only a short time ago, the town was full of enthusiasm. We had the best dressed nine and smartest lot of players in the west. Our Team could do them all up certainly. What was the result? Simply this, a committee was organized to manage the affairs of the club financially and otherwise. A good number of Tickets were sold at \$1 each. Balls, bats paraphernalia uniforms &c., were purchased, grounds rented, backstop built, and everything done that could be to give the boys a start, and start they did with a rush. The trouble is they rushed too fast or too slow; we are not sure which. What we do know is this, that before the season is half over the club is tired out. Practice is done away with and to all intents and purposes the R. B. C. has died a natural death. Now boys this is not right. Why not do as others have done in similar circumstances, brace up? It is a long lane that has no turn and besides you haven't done so terribly bad, a draw with Aylmer, also with Blenheim and two games lost to Highgate and Blenheim, and one won from Highgate. We have known clubs to do much worse and still cover themselves with glory before the playing season was over. Pull yourselves together, start practice again, keep at it steady for a week or so. Then challenge Blenheim and Highgate, go there to their own stumping grounds and mop the earth with them.

Dell Marr would make a good pitcher if he would practice it, he has some good curves and plenty of speed.

Aylmer talks of making a tour, taking in Ridgetown, Chatham and Blenheim. They should be accorded a good reception and the citizens ought to turn out in large numbers and make up a decent gate just once.

Reserved seats on the Main St. fence are to be 50 cts in future.

Your Highgate correspondent should have said in his report that it was the kids from here that got in the soup there last week. Another thing when Highgate came here and won, in addition to the regular associated press report sent from here their reporter went to the trouble to send the Toronto Press a detailed account of their victory. But when Ridgetown won from them in Highgate not a word was sent to Toronto papers either by the regular associated press agent or their secretary. How is this, the agent here may be a Ridgetown enthusiast but win or lose he always sends the report just the same.

Thamesville was to have played the Juniors here on Monday, but failed to show up.

The Highest Praise.

I used a bottle of Burdock Blood Bitters for my Dyspepsia and it proved a perfect cure, and I was blessed the day I got it. I would not be without it now for a good lot. I would not be without it now for a good lot. It is worth its weight in gold. Mrs. W. J. SMITH, Haley Station, Ont.

Linker's Baby

From the Indianapolis News.

Tom Linker was one of the boys, and there are many in this city who would know him should his right name be given. He made good wages, spent his money freely and was a hale fellow well met with every one.

When he and Mary stood before the altar in the little church and linked their lives together many were the compliments they received, for indeed they were a fine couple. Their friends congratulated them and the future looked bright. And when the first little prattler came, the acme of their happiness seemed to have been reached.

But Tom's old habits clung to him, and ere many years had gone he began to neglect his home. Often he would come home late at night under the influence of liquor. The money he earned passed over the bar of the saloon, and the roses faded from Mary's cheeks. The stars left her eyes, her face became pinched, and deep lines of sorrow chased away the dimples. Still she did not complain, and Tom did not see what great changes were going on in his home. From one house to another they moved. The little home on which Tom on his wedding day had made the first payment was gone, and at last his midnight reel carried him to a miserable hovel in which a heart-broken woman and child existed.

Tom had reached the bottom. He had descended that he would scrub out saloons that he might get the dregs of alcoholic stimulants. He was Bummer Linker now with a run colored nose and eyes bleared and bloodshot. Many times he inhabited the "drunk room" at the station house, and when he was brought in the desk sergeant would say, "Hello, Linker; you here again? Why don't you brace up and be some one? You used to be a pretty good kind of a fellow."

Tom would only mumble and drop down into a corner to sleep. In police court he was a "chronic" he was fined time and time again. But the law did not reform him. Mary did not

upbraid him. Oh, how often did she droop her knees beside the miserable bed where her little ones rested and asked God to give her back Tom, the Tom she knew in years gone by, the Tom who stood at her side in the little church.

One cold and dismal night, when the snow was on the ground and all nature was ice-clad, Tom was in a low barroom asleep. Some cruel joker had painted his swollen face with lamp black and were having rare sport with the drunken man. When he awoke and realized his condition he became angry, and the result was that he was badly beaten and thrown out of doors. Then he staggered homeward. That night while the father was at the barroom, two-year-old baby Mary, whose eyes and dimples were like mother's used to be, was taken suddenly ill with that night dread of all mothers, the croup, and in a few hours her little life was ended. While the mother bent over the form of her child and bathed its face with her tears Tom staggered in and threw himself on a chair, with a besotted oath; then as sleep overcame him, he fell to the floor, where he lay till morning with Mary's faded and torn shawl under his head for a pillow. All night long the mother sat beside her dead and sent her prayers Heavenward. When morning's light appeared, and Tom benumbed with cold and partially sobered, saw his dead child and realized that he had not been near to wipe the death damp from its brow or help it battle for life, then an old feeling, become new, came to him. Down on his knees, with his face buried in the tattered bed clothing, he sobbed as only great strong men can sob, and Mary, the wreck of long ago, placed her wasted arm about his neck, and with her wan face against his, unmindful of the lamp black, the fumes of vile liquor, mingled her tears with his. But no promises of reformation did Tom make.

Kind neighbors furnished a little coffin, and when Tom, trembling in every limb from dissipation, dropped hot, burning tears on the little face upturned, and with his shaking hand caressed the tiny white hands peacefully crossed on the bosom of white, people wondered "if this will be a lesson to him." The funeral was unpretentious. Every clod that fell on the coffin struck a blow on Tom's heart. For two days Tom remained at home, and on the third, when he started away, he took his wife in his arms and kissed her as he did in times gone by. And when he returned Mary listened for his step, oh, so anxiously, and when she heard it, thanked God it was the step of a sober man.

Tom was missed from the barroom, from the police station, from the Police Court. He quit drinking and went to work. Go to one of the largest factories in the city. Pass among the whirling wheels and ringing hammers. See that tall, broad-shouldered man with a cheery face, begrimed, not with lampblack, but with the result of honest labor. That's Tom Linker.

When the whistle sounds he takes off his apron, buttons his stout coat about him, and with a brisk, swinging walk and a cheery whistle, starts for home. Follow him to a neat little cottage and watch the picture that the light throws upon the curtains at the window. See a happy wife in tidy attire throw her arms around his neck and kiss away the dirt of the factory. See happy children clamoring to kiss papa. See them at their evening meal—and then if Tom does go out after supper, Mary and the children go along. The neat cottage isn't Tom's yet, but it will be some day, for he is the old-time Tom, sober, hard-working and honest.

Out in Crown Hill is a little mound of earth that Tom and Mary visit every Sunday. On this mound in summer the flowers ever bloom, and winter's fierce gale that rends the oak and shakes the evergreens sinks to a low, sweet and tender lullaby as it passes over the spot where rest the remains of Linker's baby.

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