

THE LAST PRAYER.

One afternoon in 18—, several carriages were seen gathering round an elegant mansion in the town of P—. A clergyman and several physicians were assembled in a darkened chamber around the accomplished Mrs. L—. The anxious countenances, the light tread, the half-suppressed breathing of the attendants, the solemn stillness that pervaded the whole group, told too plainly their fearful apprehensions that the disease of Mrs. L—, would baffle all human skill, and prove fatal to the sufferer. She had been suddenly arrested, in the full flow of health, by a disease that had locked up all her senses in a lethargic stupor, from which the skill of the physicians, and the assiduous effort of sympathising friends could not arouse her. The loss of such a friend under any circumstances could not but be severely felt: but the affliction would seem greatly increased, were she to pass into the world of spirits without any communication with those who might still linger behind. For several years she had been an ornament to the church, and her friends earnestly desired to know whether her religion proved an unflinching support, when passing through the valley of the shadow of death; and when in the course of his prayer the clergyman entreated the Lord that her consciousness and power of speech might if consistent with Divine will, be restored, most earnestly did every heart join in the request.

When all the means which affliction and professional sagacity could suggest, had been tried in vain, her little son, who had just learned to articulate a few words was brought into the room. With mingled fear and wonder he gazed upon his mother, and upon the attendants watching in silence the issue of the disease. "Ma-ma, ma-ma," said the little prattler, after a few moments silence. These words effected, as if by some mysterious power, what other appliances failed to accomplish; the mother opened her eyes and slowly stretching out her hand, beckoned for her son.—He was placed in her arms: in a low voice she commended her offspring to God, and prayed that he might meet her in heaven. That was her last prayer: in a few hours that son was motherless.

The scene now changes. We pass over the interval of twenty years, and find the son in College. The noble and commanding form of William L—, his urbanity of manners, and diligence in study, soon won him the esteem of the faculty and students. During the first year he held a high rank in his class, and gave promise of eminent usefulness. But College life puts a young man's principles to a severe test. It is a state of exposure and trial during which no youth is safe, without devoted piety, a security which William L— did not possess. He formed unfortunate connections with several idle students, the effects of which were soon apparent in his recitations. He was admonished of his danger, but seemed as if spell-bound by some fascination from which he could not escape.

It has been justly said that idleness is the parent of many vices; so it is proved in the present instance. Idleness led on to dissipation; and after repeated admonitions and fruitless efforts to reclaim him, William L—, was expelled from college a drunkard! Small indeed did the probability seem that his mother's last prayer would be answered.

William returned to his home.—The report of his expulsion from college, and the cause of it, blasted the high raised expectations of his friends, and sounded in their ears like the knell of all his prospects and hopes. Still they endeavoured to throw around him such influence and associations as would restore his self respect; and with all the eloquence of pure affection they besought him to abandon at once and for ever the intoxicating bowl. Their earnest entreaties led him to moderate, in some degree, his excesses, but produced no radical reformation; and his friends, wearied with unavailing efforts, were beginning to conclude that they must give up his case as hopeless.

One dark cloudy evening William was sitting alone in his chamber musing upon the great change that had within a few years come over his prospects, when his uncle entered his room and proposed a walk. William put on his hat and accompanied him. Whether by accident or design, they walked in the direction of the grave yard and soon found themselves by the grave of Mrs. L—. The white tomb stones around, scarcely visible in the darkness, read a silent but impressive lesson on the frailty of

man. As they were leaning on the gravestone of Mrs. L—, the uncle gave William a description of her character, and the circumstances attending her death, and particularly her dying prayer that he might meet her in heaven; "and now" said he taking William by the hand, "will you meet her in heaven, or will you die a drunkard? William burst into tears, and sank down upon his mother's grave overwhelmed with emotion. The darkness without was but a faint emblem of the darkness and horror within. Guilt, remorse, shame, stung him to an intensity of anguish such as he had never before known. His life passed in rapid review; his talents wasted—his time mispent—reputation blasted—hopes crushed—the hearts of friends bleeding over his degradation—a mother's last fond desire unheeded—her last prayer unanswered—these and kindred reflections came crowding upon his thoughts, and death itself seemed preferable to his present degradation and wretchedness. He retired to his chamber and to a sleepless pillow. The next morning, when the family had gathered round the breakfast table, they found upon it a temperance pledge, drawn up in the strictest form, and signed by William L—. From that time may be dated not only reformation of external character, but it is believed an internal and spiritual renovation of the heart.

He now resolved to resume his studies and prepare for some useful station; but before he could put his purpose into operation he was seized with a fever which left no hopes of his recovery. He bore his protracted illness without a murmur, and seemed desirous of recovery only that he might counteract in some degree the evil he had already done. On one occasion, when his father told him the physician had recommended a little wine, he said, "father, if you insist upon it, I will take wine, though I should greatly prefer not to do it. I must die, and let me die without being polluted by what has well nigh wrought my ruin." His request was granted. A few days after, a long and silent procession was seen moving to the church yard, preceded by the mortal remains of William L—. His body slumbers by the side of his sainted mother; but where is the Spirit? We believe that the mother's last prayer was answered, and that her son has gone to meet her in heaven.—*Christian Reporter.*

ANNALS OF TEMPERANCE.

The Apostle of Temperance has taken advantage of the opening of the New Year to enforce on his disciples the duty of adhering to their profession, by reminding them of their self-imposed obligation, and repeating his often told arguments and inducements to confirm their resolutions. Let an appeal of the character should lead to an imputation of laxity of adherence to the principle among his professed adherents, he invests it with the garb of an invitation to those without the pale of his moral sovereignty. To these, in the first instance, he addresses his pithy summary of the rule of his order, its essence and its effects, convinced that the recital, while it cannot fail to enlist new members, will react upon the consciences of those already serving under the banner he has unfolded, stimulating them to perseverance on their own behalf, and increased exertion in their endeavours to extend the sphere of its operations among such as are yet uninitiated.

"This, my dear friends, is an auspicious day, the first day of the New Year, a day devoted to good works and good beginnings; and what better beginning could there be than to devote yourselves from this day, to the practice of Sobriety and virtue: and what better wish could I offer up, than to wish, that you were all as I am, and that you were all enrolled under the pure banner of Temperance, I do wish from my heart and soul, that every human being would renounce for ever the use of intoxicating drinks, for I can say, without fear of contradiction, that nothing conduces more to happiness than an entire abstinence from them. The health of the body and the vigour of the mind are improved by their entire surrender; and the Temperance principle is pregnant with good both for time and eternity. Our enemies know not at this moment a single argument to justify their opposition to our Cause—the arguments that had been relied on at first have been: retorted a thousand times, and in the most practical manner—by the improved health, morals, manner, habits, and comfort of the people. We have converts to the Cause every day, and feel