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THE PATRIARCH AND THE VINE.

BY MRS. SIGOURNEY.

This earth doth yield

More than enough that temperance may be tried.—MILTON.

In the days of old, a patriarch dwelt among the mountains of the East. Many sore troubles and wondrous changes had been, and stood faithful when all around had sinned, and were punished.

He was a peaceful tiller of the earth, and when he cast seeds into her bosom, they sprang up abundantly, each after its kind. So he, and his wife, and children, fed upon their fruits, and blessed the Lord.

And, behold, among the plants, there came up one, very green, and of a tender green. The rain watered it, and it grew, and put forth leaves, and its tendrils were like the hands of a young child reaching after some pleasant thing.

When he set up a prop, and guided it therunto; for he said, "I will venture its heart is feeble, and it needeth that some one should train it in the right way." So it towered upward, and became a vine, with interlacing boughs, and making a deep shadow.

Upon these appeared, here and there, among its branches, swelling clusters. The master of the vine smelled a sweet odour, and called his household to admire their beauty. Every day as the sun looked earnestly upon them, they ripened more deeply. Rich moisture trickled from them, and when they were fully ripe, and bursting, fell to the ground.

When the patriarch pressed some of the grapes, and their sweet blood flowed, and fermented, and he drank thereof, his wisdom departed from him, and he lay uncovered upon his tent.

His sons were amazed, and spake one to another with sorrowful faces. But the youngest derided, saying, "Lo! he that reproveth folly, hath himself become altogether vain. He loveth it not them, who warn others, to take heed unto their own ways?"

His brethren admonished him, and said, "Hold thy peace! Him that revileth his father, God shall judge." Then they took a garment, and covered the patriarch,—walking backward, lest they should look upon his infirmity.

And they sat down mournfully near the door of the tent, and spake unto each other, saying, "Behold, how great is our father, and how honoured of God—inasmuch as he hid not from him his own counsels, and the flood that was to drown the ungodly.

"Yea! when all flesh had corrupted itself, he alone was found pleasing to the Most High, and with eloquent words warned a world lying in wickedness.

"Through his faith were we saved, when the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and destruction overwhelmed a world lying in wickedness. Yet behold! now lieth he powerless, as the babe that is newly born. Who knoweth whether he is not now about to die?" And they lifted up their voices and wept.

Then it seemed as if some good angel spake unto them, and their hearts were comforted: "Hearken, sons of the patriarch! Behold he shall not die. The glory of his reason shall return, and he will repent himself: and as the bow breaketh forth from the cloud, so shall his righteousness be renewed."

And it came to pass, when he awoke from his trance, and knew what had been done unto him, he called for his elder sons and blessed them in the name of the Lord. But on the youngest he uttered a malediction, because he had mocked at his father in the time of his infirmity.

This knew the patriarch the evil in the fruit of the vine, which his own hand had planted. But he learned, in bitterness and shame, and by the cost of his own experience, what was tenderly taught us in our early years, that a curse lieth hid in the cluster that doth seem so fair.

Moreover, a Holy Book, which his eyes never beheld, doth warn us, and our children, saying, "Look not on the wine when it is red, when it giveth its colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright; for at the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder."

OBJECTIONS TO TOTAL ABSTINENCE.

We think all objections started by individuals who decline to become identified with the total abstinence movement, have respect either to the principle itself, or to the constitution and character of the societies by which that principle is maintained and propagated.

Some object to it on the ground that it receives no countenance in the divine record.

We hesitate not to admit, at the outset, that there is no specific command in the Bible to abstain from intoxicating drinks. But whilst we frankly make this admission, we are fully prepared to prove, that in the Bible the principle receives the stamp of divine approbation. Take, for instance, the case of John the Baptist, than whom, according to the very highest authority, there never was a greater prophet,—he was enjoined to drink neither wine nor strong drink. We do not infer from this, that we are morally bound to ab-