

The Canada

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 RUINED ARTIZAN.

There is not, perhaps, a more painful spectacle in this world, than to behold an intelligent, active, skilful workman, in any department of labor, able to turn himself to almost any species of work, capable of earning high wages, maintaining a respectable position, yet constantly in beggary from the vile habit of drinking whenever the favorite beverage can be got. The pain in witnessing such a spectacle is all the more increased when we have made personal sacrifices, and done what we could to place such a workman again and again in a fair way of doing. In such a case there is a pain arising from disappointment and ingratitude blended together.

These remarks have been suggested by many instances that we have known of the most clever and skilful workmen, deplorably given to the habit of drinking—men that might have been an ornament to their country by their powers of invention, and their skill and facility in execution, and yet their sobriety could never be depended upon for a single day; and a small job, though begun, might be frequently interrupted, till useless for any purpose, by fits of intemperance.

Is it not truly painful to witness a skilful artizan, clever, original, managing in every thing but the one thing of taking care of his money and himself? And yet it is not very long ago since the feeling was quite common, at least in a part of the country well known to ourselves, that the only clever workmen were really those who were most frequently drunk. The man who could drink was, ten to one, the man who could himself most readily and ingeniously turn his hand to every kind of job. The same idea was also entertained regarding those who attempted poetry. All those who presumed to climb Parnassus, or drink of the water of Helicon, must first souse themselves in the muddy contents of the beer barrel, if they could afford nothing stronger, or, if they could, they must first quaff inspiration from the mountain dew. Such ideas are not yet exploded; there are many who still labor under the delusion, that any great mental effort, whether in art or literature, requires to be begun and conducted under the influence of strong stimulants. We believe this is a very erroneous impression, and we have no hesitation in saying that the most vigorous, and pure, and manly sentiments in Burns were composed when his intellect was clear, and neither clouded nor excited by intoxicating draughts. The natural fervor of his soul did not require them.

But it was our intention, in these few remarks, principally

to depict the effects of drinking on skilful, talented, but infatuated artizans. Why is it that many of them are so deplorably intemperate? Their cleverness, their skill, their adaptation to almost every job, are certainly not the result of their drinking, but their drinking habits have been entailed upon them, indirectly, on account of the superior facilities which they possess in doing almost anything. We say indirectly, for their talents are certainly not to be blamed for making them drunkards, else woe be to the talented and skilful workman. But their talents and skill have unfortunately, in such a country as this, been the means of bringing them more than they would have been brought, under the influence of the drinking customs of the country. It is with the talented workman as it is with the punster, and the wit, or the man that can tell a good story, or pass a capital joke, or keep the whole table in a roar. Such a man is frequently invited to parties for the sake of his pleasing companionship, and then he must drink. And such a workman is frequently presented with extra jobs for which drink is the only payment. Nothing can be more pernicious to the workman than such false kindness—yea, rather let us call it deliberate cruelty—nothing is more ruinous than such payments. It is a lamentable state of things, and it speaks volumes against such a practice, when a clever workman, on account of the very talent he possesses, in connection with the drinking customs of the country, is most exposed to danger. We have known many such workmen, and few if any of them were sober men.

One of those (he died a drunkard) we yet remember well, for many a little ship he rigged for us, and many a kite he made, and many a rabbit house he built, and many a large top he turned for the boys of the village. He could turn his hand to almost everything. There was not a clock in the village went wrong, but John put it all to rights. He was a millwright by trade. But it was hard to say what trade he belonged to. The repairing of clocks and watches, the painting of sign-boards, or bell hanging, or cutting and lettering gravestones, came as ready to him as the setting up of threshing machines, which was certainly his forte.—And yet John was the poorest man in the parish; for he was, unfortunately, just as clever at turning up his little finger, as he was at turning any fancy piece of work. He was, certainly, a genius; but like almost every other genius, he was simple, too simple; and his drinking habits, latterly came to destroy the remaining force of any little principle he had ever possessed. His simple nature and obliging disposition led him to proffer his services on any occasion when he could be of