

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 Broken Contract.

BY T. M. COLEMAN.

(From the National Temperance Magazine.)

Since the advent of teetotalism no event produced such glorious results as the signing of the temperance pledge by the 'immortal six' in Baltimore, some time during the year 1840. This year will long be distinguished as the one in which the great temperance reformation received an impetus that told, and will continue to tell, upon the best interests of our country.

The simple act of signing a temperance pledge, by six men, long addicted to the use of alcoholic liquors, and the relation of their suffering white slaves to a debased appetite, filled the land with astonishment. A great moral problem had been solved, and it was proved by demonstration, that mental treatment could triumph over physical change—that the pledge, with its associations, was a specific for what had long been deemed an incurable malady—that the determination of an honest persevering spirit, could change the morbid and diseased condition of those who had long suffered from the poisonous fangs of the serpent of the still.

Many, for a time, doubted; but when after a lapse of months, the 'six' with the many who had united with them in the movement, were found faithful and steadfast, the most sceptical were obliged to banish their doubts. The friends of the inebriate were confirmed in their fondest anticipations, and the general pulse beat high with joy. As the news spread of the great doings, in the 'old monumental city,' of those who had been snatched from the brink of the drunkard's grave, hope and gladness sprang up in the breasts of thousands who had long suffered from the serpent's bite.

The work progressed rapidly.—Like the undulations of the waves produced by casting a stone into a silent lake, it extended from centre to circumference, from city to city, from town to town, until every valley was filled with the joyous shouts of victory and every hill and mountain gave back an answering response. It was a year of general joy. The good work swept onward and onward, filling the hearts of thousands with gladness; wiping away tears from the face of beauty; kindling anew the cheerful fire on the domestic hearth, and scattering on every hand blessing and gladness. The 'void waste' as well as the city full shared in the general blessings of the glorious reform.

While listening to the simple tale of the reformed inebriate, and witnessing in him the saving power of the pledge, the poor, and almost hopeless drunkard, felt a new life springing up in his soul, and Eke them, they signed the pledge, and stood before their fellow men firm in a determination to be free. Strange sight, the drunkard of yesterday the temperance advocate of to-day, bearing in himself the value of the doctrine he proclaimed.

In short time this blessed reformation reached the city in which the writer resided. Its power and value were soon

made evident in the saving of many who had been considered beyond redemption. Among the number who embraced the principles of total abstinence was a young physician, who at one time enjoyed the confidence of many in the city, but his continued habits of dissipation had driven all from him. Soon after his reformation, he was called upon to enter the field of labor, and surely it was a singular sight, to see a man just 'plucked as a brand from the burning' now associating with ministers of the gospel, and day after day, to crowded audiences, holding forth, even from the 'sacred desk,' and seeking to influence the wandering and unwary to fly from the snares which beset them, and to enter into the good to which he owed so much.

The doctor's field of labor was extensive, and it was during one of his visits to a neighboring State the following incident occurred, and we shall proceed to relate it, as it was given to us soon after his return.

Among other places visited by me said the Doctor, was the church at——, having received a kind invitation from the pastor so to do. The reverend gentleman informed me in his letter, that he did not know how I might succeed, as there would undoubtedly be strong opposition to the movement, and that, too, he was sorry to say, from many influential members of his church.

The audience was all attention, and at the close of the address, upwards of one hundred came forward and signed the pledge of total abstinence. Among this number were eight or ten of what is generally termed 'hard cases.' Much, however, to the sorrow of the good warm hearted pastor, but few of his influential members seemed inclined to join in the good work.—This failed to surprise me when I understood, that within two miles of the church there were four or five distilleries in full operation, scattering the seeds of disease and destruction throughout the neighborhood. Four of these were owned by members of the church.

Notwithstanding this opposition, the success that crowned my efforts was so encouraging, that I determined to persevere, and meetings were held day and night, until the entire neighborhood had been revolutionized, and three of the distillers had signed the pledge and abandoned their business. More than five hundred had given their names, and united their efforts in the good work; but still one man held back, he was a member and Elder of the church: and the remaining distiller.

All the entreaties of his pastor, all the remonstrances of his brethren, all the persuasions of the three distillers who had signed the pledge, were unavailing. He would not yield. To save him from loss, the society offered to purchase his stock, but all in vain.

Elder M—— had commenced life poor, but he was now a wealthy man. And as the light of the temperance reformation diffused itself abroad, his neighbors could see that his coffers were filled by drawing every penny from those who were rich previous to the establishment of his distillery.