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## THE PEDLAR'S STORY.

*For the Canada Temperance Advocate.*

About the 1st of May, 1841, my business led me to your busy bustling city, to purchase my little stock of Dry Goods for the coming summer, but I had to spend a fortnight before new supplies were offered for sale. As I was one afternoon sauntering along the wharves of the canal, I chanced to meet an old school-fellow whom I had not seen for some ten or twelve years, and each was glad to express his friendship by an invitation to a dram—as is too often the case with friends on meeting after a lapse of years' absence. So we went into one of the grog-shops, (having no particular choice as to houses, except the nearest,) and called for two glasses of brandy, talked of old times, old acquaintances, and of the happy days of never returning boyhood. Thus we sat, and drank glass after glass, unwilling to part till my friend informed me that he had to be at a certain place at six o'clock that evening. We parted with the fond hope of meeting at my lodgings that same night; but alas, we did not meet since. No sooner had my friend parted from me, than I resumed my walk; but not being accustomed to the frequent use of ardent spirits, the fumes rose to my head, and I became unconscious of what I was about, or of where I was going, nor had I any recollection of what happened, till I found myself lodged up safely in the black hole of the Hay-market Police Station-House, along with two others who had been in there several times before for acts of petty theft committed in the city. On my returning senses, my first appeal was to my pocket, in search of my finances; when lo and behold, my pocket-book, containing one hundred and thirty-five pounds in Bank checks, and five dollars in bills, were gone, together with several notes of hand and all my accounts. Gracious God, I exclaimed, have I been hoarding up money these ten years, toiling and traveling through heat and cold, to be stripped of it in an instant by my own imprudence!!! At this time, I felt rather willing to be dead than alive—to find myself so completely beggared. After my perturbation had ceased, I rapped at my prison door, to know when and how I came there, and if I had any money taken from me by any of the police. I was answered that I was brought there about half-past five, no crime against me but drunk on the streets, and that there was one-and-six-pence for me in the office. O then I've been robbed of one hundred and thirty-six pounds five shillings, was my wild but faltering response; for when I came into town, I deposited it in the ——— Bank, and got checks for that amount.

Well, the long wished for hour of eight o'clock came, when all the cells poured forth their inmates. We were brought into a large square room, where we all had to give an account of ourselves before the police Captain, tell our names, where we were from, and what was our individual avocations, with the exception of those who were not strangers there. As for the common police, they told our crimes each in his turn, with what trouble he had in bringing the prisoner to the Station House, adding that he or she, as the case might be, was an old offender—though he never saw the prisoner before. I sat patiently listening to all that was passing, till my turn came. The policeman who arrested me was a Canadian, and as he spoke in the French language, I did not understand what he said. When I told the Captain that I had lost my money, he said as

the checks were not endorsed, they could not be of any use to any one, and as to the five dollars, I might be thankful that it was no more. You may be sure that this story raised my drooping spirits sixty degrees in an instant, to think that all was not lost which was in danger; then handing me one shilling and six-pence, which was all found in my possession to his knowledge, said he was sorry for me, and that I must take better care for the future—which I sincerely promised to do, and was walking off, when I was told that I must go before Captain C——, to the New Market. Men, women and boys, were all ordered out, ten in number, and me along with the rest, into McGill street, escorted by four thief-catchers. There was one shoeless, shirtless, hatless ragamuffin, who had stolen a bundle of clothes, and had to carry it on his back; as for all the rest of us, we had nothing to encumber us.

The reader may form an idea of my state of mind, to be seen on a Sunday morning marching in the midst of thieves and prostitutes, pick-pockets and drunkards, through the principal thoroughfares of the city of Montreal, and that at an hour of the day when the people were going to worship their God at their respective churches. The rank I then held in society, was not an enviable one—marching through Notre Dame street, then down St. Francois Xavier street, and up St. Paul street to the New Market, where I was glad to get hid from the view of the populace, fearful that any person should see me who knew me before, for I was certain that all who saw me then, would know me again at any rate.

At our first setting out, I besought one of the guards to allow me to walk out of the ranks, so that I should not be so much taken notice of; but to this he would not agree, saying that he had no orders to do so. I thought it was very cruel, but I had to become resigned to my fate. When we came to the New Market Station House, our names were called over by the sergeant, whose duty it was to do so I suppose; after which ceremony, we were all driven up stairs and locked in a dungeon with nine or ten of the worst looking characters the city of Montreal could produce, to await the coming of Capt. C——, the men and boys in one place, and the women and girls in another. After an hour's incarceration there, Capt. C—— came, called us by our respective names, discharged some, and reserved others for the decision of the Court House; but when he cast his eyes upon me, I thought it foreboded something very inauspicious. "Where did you come from?" cried he. I told him the whole truth, but he did not believe me, and ordered me to the common jail, saying that I was a suspicious looking character, and should be strictly looked after. I was then taken and put into what I call the *Vagabond Car*, along with three old prostitutes. This vehicle I mounted with fear and trembling, not knowing where the scene would end. If I was exposed to the view of the populace while on foot, I was much more so when mounted on this triumphal car, with my amiable companions cursing and execrating their common enemy, Capt. C——, all the way through the Quebec Suburb. During this tour, I concealed my face from the view of the curious. When we arrived at the place of our destination, the jailer called us by name, sent my female companions one way and me another. I was ushered into a long, hall, arched over head, and ornamented on both sides with massive iron