

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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NIGHTS IN THE OLD ALMSHOUSE.

[The following narrative is supposed to be related by one whose mother died of a broken heart when he was but eleven years of age. After she was laid in the grave, there was no one to care for him but his drunken father, who had become so debased as scarcely to retain any truly human feelings. He sold the bed upon which his wife had slept, gave up the room she had occupied, and with his little son, it being summer-time, went out into the woods to sleep at night. We give only a fragment from a long and painfully interesting history.]

At first, I could not sleep for fear, all alone as we were in the woods. And often, after I had fallen into a dose, would I be awakened by the noise of the wind rustling through the trees. My father always slept soundly. After a while, as I became more accustomed to it, I could sleep as well in the woods as any where else.

I remember one beautiful summer-night we went out into the woods about eleven o'clock, my father so much in liquor that I had to lead him. Our usual place of sleeping was just within the enclosure of Col. Howard's garden, on the side next to the city, (Baltimore,) and close to the small stream that flowed from the stone spring-house a little west of the garden. With much difficulty I got him over the fence, and we laid ourselves down on our grassy bed. My father was soon asleep, and snoring loudly. After a while I got into a doze from which I awakened, or appeared to awake, in, I suppose, something like half an hour. It looked unusually light, and I raised my head to see what caused it. Within a few feet of me, was a female figure. She was very beautiful, and a soft light shone out from her in all directions. I knew her to be my mother, in a moment. Her face was sad and pale, but there was something heavenly in its expression. She fixed her mild eyes upon me long and sorrowfully, and there was a look of warning in her countenance. I did not at that moment feel afraid, but sprang to my feet, and called, 'Mother!' Instantly she faded from my sight, and all was darkness. Clouds had covered the sky, and a low wind murmured among the trees, rustled through the long grass, and stole about me cold and chillingly. Greatly frightened, I crept close to my father, who still slept soundly, shut my eyes, and lay trembling with a strange fear, until I again fell asleep. I do not know how long it was before I awakened, but I was aroused by a stunning roar, and found that the rain was pouring down in torrents. I had only got my eyes fairly open, when the whole heaven seemed to be in a single blaze

of light, and then came a peal of thunder which made the very earth tremble under my feet. My father was also now wide awake, and we sought the temporary shelter of a large tree, guided by the almost incessant flashes of lightning. Soon, however, the leaves no longer retained the large drops that fell upon them, and we were drenched to the skin. The storm continued for more than an hour, with frightful violence. I never felt so awful in my life. The tremendous jarring and rattling of the thunder—the almost incessant blazing out of the lightning: and the roaring of the wind among the trees, were such as I had never heard nor seen. To those who were closely sheltered in their houses, that was an awful night; but to us who were all alone in the woods, it was terrible indeed. It was daylight ere the storm abated. When I could distinguish my father's face, I saw that it was very pale, and that he trembled in every limb. Slowly we left our home in the woods—it was the only place where we could lay our heads—and drenched with rain, sought our way to the city, to pick up something to eat and drink. Dry clothes we had none, for our wardrobe we carried on our backs. While my father waited around the corner of a street, I went into the kitchen of the Golden Horse Tavern, and got a supply of cold bread and meat. A fresh loaf of bread I begged at a baker's; this we sold for liquor, and then went back to the woods to devour our breakfast. After this we parted, my father to lounge in a grog-shop, and I to pick up a few coppers, if possible. We met at dinner-time. I had elevenpence. This we made go as far as possible. Six cents worth of liquor satisfied my father's thirst; while three cents worth of cakes and three cents worth of crackers, checked the gnawing of our appetites. We then went back to the woods.

While sitting on the grass, under a tree, my father told me that he had got a room in the old Poor House, which was vacant, the inmates having been removed to their palace-home at Calverton. Here, he said, we could sleep at night and not care for the storms. And it would be a shelter on Sundays, when some of our favorite haunts were closed.

I, of course, had nothing to say in opposition, and so out we went to the Poor House to inspect the premises, and choose among its many deserted chambers one that we might call our home. I had never before been within this spacious, but time-worn building. As we went up the broad avenue, entered the gate, and stood beneath the trees that threw their broad shadows upon us, I felt indeed the silent desolation of the place. But a few months before, hundreds of human beings were here; now, we alone thought and felt where thou-