

TEMPERANCE ADVOCATE,

DEVOTED TO TEMPERANCE, EDUCATION, AGRICULTURE & NEWS.

M. G. ...

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.

Vol. XVIII.]

MONTREAL, AUGUST 2, 1852.

No. 16

The Widow's Appeal.

We give the following truthful appeal, originally intended for the Legislature of Ohio, because it is equally applicable here, and because it states appalling facts in a way likely to awaken the sympathies of those for whom it is more immediately designed :

GENTLEMEN: I am about to address you through the medium of the public press, because I well know your multiplied calls prevent you from giving due heed to all the requests that cumber your tables; and because I am about to detail to you matters of truthful history, which are known only to myself and to Him who is omniscient and knoweth all things; and yet, true as these things are, respect for the feelings of the living and for the memory of the dead, prevents me from subscribing my own name thereto. My heart bleeds when I think how many thousands and hundreds of thousands of similar cases of accursed wrong, caused by an accursed system of vending poison and death, lie buried in the grave, or in hearts deeper than the grave, and which will never be told till that day when God shall judge both quick and dead, and the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed.

I am one of those whose names are already upon your tables, petitioning for the passage of a law prohibiting the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors as a beverage. I have done more than this; I have laid aside, for a time, a woman's instinctive dread of encountering the gaze, the ridicule, and the rebuffs of those who appreciate not her motives, and I have traversed weary distances, and entered dark abodes of sin, entreating for names to that humble petition which prays for your aid in accomplishing a work which would cause more joy on earth, and in Heaven also, than any other event, save one, that this glorious sun of ours ever shone upon. In these walks, I have found the sick and destitute wives and widows of those who are daily sinking, or have already sunk, into the drunkard's grave. I have seen the tear of joy leap from haggard eyes because their owners had the poor privilege of subscribing their names to such a petition; and I have departed, bearing with me blessings of those ready to perish, and followed by the prayers of those who have audience in Heaven, if not on earth.

Oh! could you, ye honorable legislators of this great and glorious State—could you behold, with unclouded vision, how many from the hovels of misery; how many from the mansions of the rich, how many from pallets of straw and couches of down are sending up petitions to Heaven's high throne, for blessings upon your deliberations, and invoking for you the guidance of infinite wisdom; and could you know with what trembling anxiety these praying mothers, sisters, and daughters watch your movements, and wait with excited hopes the tidings of your doings in this behalf, you would not—you could not turn an indifferent ear to our supplications.

I know it is said by some that women have no right to petition, or, at least, ought not to be heard on so grave a question, as this. They say that we are not fit to judge of the consequences and relative bearings of such a law; that we are swayed by feeling and sympathy, and hence that our views should have little weight in the decision of legislators, when interests of such magnitude are at stake. It may be so; but hear my tale and judge if it be true.

In early life I married a man who moved in the first circles of no mean city. He was a descendant of Puritan stock, and his

venerable father's silvery locks yet command wide respect amid those who linger on Pilgrim ground. He was a worthy son of a worthy sire—a man among men. In the commercial world he stood fair among the fairest. Abundance blessed our board. If we had not wealth in hoarded profusion, we had enough for all our wants, and even the rich might have envied us our happiness. But when I dreamed of no danger, the foe, with serpentine dissembling, wound his coils around my loved and cherished one, and blighted my every earthly hope. Oh, never!—never shall I forget the agony of that hour, when first the full conviction flashed upon my mind that the father of my children—my own loved and cherished husband—was a drunkard! Oh, ye who revel in wealth wrung from widow's tears and hoard up gold coined from orphan's groans, were I a demon damned, and wished to heap upon your devoted heads the coals of unquenchable fire, I could not wish you worse than that you might drink of that bitter cup, which then you forced to my unwilling lips, and compelled me to drink, even to the deepest dregs.

But even then I knew not the power of my deadly foe. Hope, that angel of mercy, sprang up from the depths of despair, and with the frantic energy of the fire-surrounded victim of the prairie flames, I strove to release him from the grasp of the fell destroyer. I strove, oh God! thou knowest how hard I strove, to conceal from myself and others the truth. With my husband the struggle was equally severe, if not as ardent. He saw not at first the danger, but for my sake and his children's sake, he resolved that he would be free. Like Samson he rose in all the conscious strength of manhood's prime; but like him, who dallied with an enemy, he too, soon found out he was shorn of his strength, and yielded in abject submission to his deadliest foe. Thrice before God and man, he took the solemn pledge that he would no more yield to the tempter, and thrice he fell but to taste in all its renewed horrors, a drunkard's hell. Oh yes, many, many times, when no eye but God and my own witnessed his struggle, and when he knew not of my vigils, I have seen him prostrate and weeping as though his once manly heart would break, as he reviewed the past, and looked forward to the future. 'Twas then he realized his hopeless, irretrievable bondage! Yet he was not a gutter drunkard. He seldom reeled in the street; he was never a public, degraded sot. But he was in a demon's power, and, demon-like, he would in ten thousand ways which shall forever remain nameless, harrow up my very soul, and render life a burden. Property vanished; friends grew cold; the proud despised us, and tongues of malice were dipped in gall. All this he saw with blurred vision, and sometimes keenly felt that he had brought it all upon those whom he loved dearer than life. Day and night I toiled! night and day I watched and prayed: yes, weeks and months and years I struggled, and by the free use of hands not ashamed to work, but heretofore all unused to toil, I, unaided by mortal arm, fed, clothed, and sheltered my little ones, and by main force held up my degraded husband also. And while thus I gave up to sacred duty my choicest years of life, he who would have been, but for accursed drink, my protector and supporter, was driving deeper and deeper the barbed arrows into my life-springs, till at last, maniac-like, his cruel blows of which no one knew or heard, drove me, and those whom God had given me, to seek shelter and protection where ruin could not invade my sanctuary.

Need I tell you the anguish of that fatal hour? Need I tell you how it brought me to the very gates of death, whence, after