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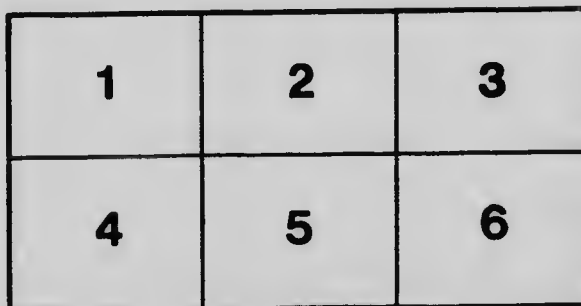
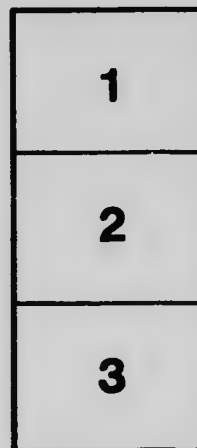
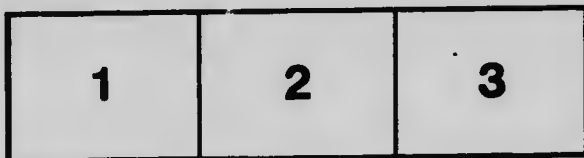
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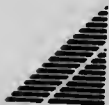
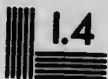
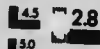
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ARCHIE BROWN

A Temperance Poem

BY LINDEN CAFT

"Look not thou upon the wine when it is red."—

Prov. 23, 31.

Montreal:

JOHN LOVELL & SON.

1901.

PREFACE.

In the following Poem the writer has endeavoured to illustrate the journey of an innocent boy down through the stages of petty vices, drink and disgrace. Fictitious as "Archie Brown" and his life depicted in these verses may be, the reader will no doubt agree with the writer in feeling with regret that many a poor drunken tramp would relate as sad a tale were he to give a true account of his past life.

The nature of the Poem may suggest its being used as a recitation, the reciter being disguised as a drunkard of about sixty years of age.

STANBRIDGE, JULY, 1901.

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Archie Brown

A TEMPERANCE POEM.

BY LINDEN CARTER.

Young man, look at me, see this bloated face,
These bloodshot eyes, that wrinkled brow, and place
Your ear upon this breast. The beat within
Is muffled and irregular. How thin
These trembling hands that I can scarce command ;
My knees they totter, I can hardly stand.

What am I but a miserable wretch ?
I lean against a wall, at evening I stretch
My weary limbs upon a mow of hay,
To rest myself again upon the coming day ;
And thus in rags a horrid life I lead,
Regarding neither custom, law, nor creed.

You view me with contempt, you wonder why
I should exist at all, and so do I ;
Still, if it for no other purpose be,
'Tis this, perhaps—that you, young man, may see
The fruits of sin, and seeing, you may know
That men must reap the kind of seed they sow.

Young man, so full of hope, so full of strife,
Just entering the battle-field of life,
You mock me now ; but it is for your sake
Alone that I this sad confession make ;
Pray listen to my story, and beware
The tempting traps of Satan here and there.

Some sixty years ago a little boy,
A happy father's pride, a mother's joy,
Was full of play and mischief every day,
Nor e'er forgot each evening to pray,
As, kneeling by his mother's rocker, he
Would rest his curly head upon her knee.

Ah ! could that mother but have known the fate
That did her blue-eyed Archibald await,
How willingly would she have seen those eyes
Closed in cold death to open in Paradise,
How willingly would she have watched the bier
Move to the grave with one to her so dear.

The boy soon went to Greyville's little school,
Nor was he classed as anybody's fool ;
Well learned were all his lessons, and at play
He always was the hero of the day ;
And there was none throughout the little town,
But could say something good of Archie Brown.

Time brought those glorious school-days to an end,
And Abram Brown decided he would send
His brilliant son to college, for said he,
" A boy of mine shall never work like me ;
Although our fifty acre farm it take,
A lawyer of our Archie shall we make."

The farm was mortgaged, and with many tears
 Young Archie left the scenes of boyhood years
 For other scenes where sin and woe are rife,
 To realize his dreams of college life ;
 Nor do we find as promising young men
 At every turn as Archie Brown was then.

For some time all went well, but one away
 From home and mother often goes astray ;
 And so it was with even Archie, though
 No one in Greyville would have thought it so ;
 Strong was his will, but, ah ! alas ! too frail
 To stay the foot that wooed the downward trail.

His ready wit and generosity
 Made many chums, and hard it is to be
 With those who smoke their flavored cigarettes,
 At evening games will stake their trivial bets,
 And find amusement at the theatre,
 And be the "odd one" so unpopular.

His "no," so firm at first, lost all its strength
 And changed it to a sheepish "yes" at length.
 "No harm," he argued, "if I never do
 Things worse than these ; so many do so too."
 But there was conscience whispering within,
 "This is the way that ruined lives begin."

"Beware ! Beware !" The voice seemed to say,
 "To break a good resolve clears up the way
 For breaking others ; Archie Brown, beware !
 How nicely woven is the Devil's snare ;
 Once you have entered you will come to grief ;
 'Tis easier caught than 'tis to find relief."

To please companions and be popular
 He smoked, played cards, went to the theatre ;
 And worse than all, the alcoholic glass
 Had found its way up to his lips, alas !
 But what is life when conscience must reprove
 A fellow for this or some other move ?

How easy 'tis to get from good to bad,
 And easier still, from bad to worse, how sad !
 And thus it was with Archie who, to be
 Like fellow students, came at length to see
 Things he had once abhorred as far from right
 In such an altogether different light.

It was to lesson study's heavy strain
 That he had followed friends advice, again
 Broken a resolution firmly made,
 And taken "just a little wine to aid
 Him in his work." Thus had he learned to crave
 For that which surely makes a man a slave.

Woe to the day when Archie in his haste
 Emptied that wine cup and acquired a taste,
 Which ever since has clung with stubborn grip,
 Like some huge monster clinging to a ship,
 With arms that tighten like a vice, whenever
 To freedom gain its victim does endeavour.

Time passed away, and Archie's final year
 At college turned his parents from the dear
 Old homestead ; but without complaint they bore
 It all believing better days in store,
 For all their hopes were centered in their boy,
 Their boy who would so soon those hopes destroy.

Those parents must have often wondered why
 It was that his expenses were so high,
 But they were blind to the real, awful truth ;
 And therefore did not realize the use
 'That was made of their hard earned savings. Oh !
 Too late ! Too late ! Were they destined to know !

Examinations came and Archie passed,
 With no great honors, for he came out last,
 Just barely passing that was all. How queer !
 When he had passed so well each former year.
 Not queer at all when one will stop to think
 How fearful are the changes wrought by drink.

He during the last year had sunk so low
 That books and studies had been let to go ;
 Instead his precious evenings had been
 Spent at some club or in some hellish den,
 Where games of chance and alcohol combined
 Relieve the pocket and destroy the mind.

'Twas true that he had not lost all his pride,
 'Tis true that shame had prompted him to hide
 The truth behind some frail excuse, whene'er
 He in the class-room had failed to appear,
 Or similar offences had occurred ;
 And thus the awful facts had been defied.

'Twas Graduation Day, a date perhaps
 More glorious to ambitious college chaps
 Than any other ; but for Archie Brown
 It had no charms. That morning he strolled down,
 Cigar between his lips, to a saloon,
 Unconscious of what was to happen soon.

What is the noise? Oh! 'Tis a drunken row ;
 Just hear the swearing and the crashing! Now
 The door flies open, out into the street
 Two men come tumbling and jump to their feet.
 Like maniacs they at each other glare,
 They gnash their teeth, and curses rend the air.

One deals a blow that brings a cry of pain
 From his opponent's lips ; but look again !
 A pistol flashes in the air, a puff
 Of smoke ! Oh Archie, is it not enough,
 The life you lead, without this deed so black,
 To which in sorrow you must oft look back ?

The man he aimed at was not hit ; but look !
 Another life that random bullet took.
 " Help ! Help ! A man's been murdered!" was the cry
 That came from those who had been standing by ;
 And then before the fury of the crowd
 That gathered round him drunken Archie cowed.

Policeman's shouts, the rumbling of the wheels
 Of the patrol breaks on his ears ; he feels
 The chilling clasp of handcuffs on his wrists,
 And grinds his teeth and clinches firm his fists ;
 And then grows deathly pale as though upon
 Him his position just begins to dawn.

That afternoon within a narrow cell
 A wretched man—you know him very well—
 Lay sobbing like a child upon the floor,
 And did not hear the grating of the door
 As someone entered, " Archie " came a sad
 But still familiar voice. Was he mad ?

He started up and looked about him ; there
 His mother stood. Oh never could he bear
 To look into those eyes again ; his head
 He buried in his trembling hands, and said,
 " Oh mother, come not near me, go away ;
 'Twere better you had died than see this day."

" My boy, my darling boy !" the woman cried,
 And threw herself upon her knees beside
 The trembling form. I am your mother still,
 I loved you once, I love you now, and will
 In spite of all that they may say or do,
 In spite of all. Oh Heaven, is it true ?

" But Archie, never shall your mother think
 That you have done this awful deed ; 'twas drink,
 And he who sold the cursed stuff, and those
 Who vote for the saloon. Your mother knows
 Her boy, her Archie is not all alone
 Condemned by God for this that has been done."

" What has been done ? Oh mother, tell me all !
 Have I been dreaming ? Will this prison wall
 Soon fade away ? Will I awake to find
 Some dread illusion has preyed on my mind !
 Oh what a dream ! It seems as if I had
 Been fighting, and was, oh, so mad, so mad.

It seems as if I drew my pistol out
 And fired it, mother, when there came a shout
 Of "murder" ; then they brought me to this place.
 But more than all that haunts me is a face,
 It is the face of father, white with fear.
 I must have seen him somewhere. Was he here ?

"My boy ! My boy ! How can I tell you all ?
 And still I must ! Those things that you recall
 Are not illusions ; they are all too true.
 But Archie, more must I make known to you,
 Though through my heart it pierces like a knife ;
 That random bullet took your father's life."

And then she broke down and could say no more ;
 The warden led her from the cell, the door
 Was locked, and Archie was once more alone.
 Poor half-crazed wretch, if he had but have known
 The wiles of drink before it was too late,
 And thus avoided such an awful fate.

This very day which might have crowned his name
 With honor had, alas ! crowned it with shame ;
 Those parents had this morning come to town
 With hopes so high, and one, while walking down
 The street, had seen a sight that must have chilled
 His spirits. Yes ! By Archie had been killed.

Killed by the hand of that unworthy son,
 For whom so much he willingly had done.
 Now, had that loving mother lived to see
 Her boy, her Archibald that used to be
 Her joy and hope, almost a murderer.
 What greater sorrow could have come to her ?

And now, young man, since that eventful day
 Some forty long, long years have passed away ;
 And still, no doubt, the tale of Archie Brown
 Is oft related in the little town
 Of Greyville, that the boys may warning take,
 And never break the good resolves they make.

The old grandfather points with trembling hand
 Towards the churchyard where two tombstones stand
 To mark where Archie's long dead parents lie ;
 And tells it over, how they came to die,
 The one as you have heard, the other from
 A broken heart before the snow had come.

And what of Archie all these years ? you ask.
 To tell you all would be a trying task ;
 Suffice to say he is a drunkard still,
 And soon expects a drunkard's grave to fill.
 A cursed existence will have ended then ;
 But, ah ! how different it might have been.

You now have heard my sad, sad story through ;
 When someone hands the hellish cup to you,
 May you remember all I've said, and think
 A moment, ere the fiery stuff you drink,
 If you would really like to travel down
 The same old road I'm on—I, Archie Brown.



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