

The Effects of Drunkenness Companion Piece

Excerpts from Youth's Temperance Lecture (1841)

~Transcription~

This, little reader, is not fancy sketch, but a representation of what actually took place in the town of Foster, Rhode Island. A poor drunkard went home to his family one day from the grog-shop in a great rage, and began to beat his wife, who fled from the house, leaving her little boy behind her. She did not once think of his hurting the child, who he loved very dearly when he was sober. But being maddened by the poison he had drunk, and not knowing what he was doing, he caught up the poor boy and dashed his head against the jambs of the fireplace. The alarm was raised, and the neighbors ran in, but too late to save the child. It was so badly bruised that it lived but a short time. When the poor wretch was brought before the court to answer for the crime, one of the neighbors brought in, folded in a piece of paper, a lock of the boys hair, with skin attached to it. The man had picked it off the jamb to which it had been fastened by the blood of the poor little victim. Before the child was buried, the father was permitted by his keeper to see it, and a gentleman who was present at the time, told me he never saw a person in such agony as was that wretched man. He had become sober; his senses had returned, and he realized what he had done, and he bowed down his face upon the cold and discolored head of his little boy and mourned and wept as though his heart would break.

How do you think the hard-hearted rum-seller, who poured out the poison to the poor man, would have felt, if he had witnessed the scene?

The largest number by far of those wretched men and women who are now shut up in the jails and prisons in different parts of the country, would never have committed the crime of which they have been guilty, had they never allowed themselves to use strong drinks. And remember, little reader, that if you swallow these poisonous drinks, you cannot tell what you may be left to do, or what you may be made to suffer in consequence.

That wretched man, O! curse not him;
The fire was in his soul
Madness was burning in his brain
His rage know no control.

But pity him; a woe was his
Untold by human tongue;
O! when he saw his murdered boy,
How was his sad heart wrung!
But if you cannot pity him,
Whose soul was withered up,
How will ye look upon the wretch
That poured to him the cup?

From *Youth's Temperance Lecture* by Charles Jewett (1841)

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