GROWING OLDER.

BY MANLY WARREN.

Growing older: growing colder,
Father time becoming bolder,
Bolder far than years ago:
Never lotters, never lingers,
Marking with his skinny fingers,
Shall we e'er from found or foe?

Growing older, growing older,
Now the fires of passion moulder,
Visions of my youth are down:
From the chambers of my being,
All its earthly guests are fleeing—
Soon, my soul thou'lt be alone

Weary heart, thou'rt growing older
Art, indeed, becoming colder—
Dead to earthly joy or grief:
From the limbs so palsy shaken,
Hast sufficient warming taken
Of the sere and yellow leaf?

Growing older, growing older,
Memory may now unfold her
Treasures, time has beautified,
Till the hour my soul, immortal,
Leaves its clay at Heaven's portal,
Like a garment thrown aside

Growing older, older growing,
As the river, nearer flowing
Feels the impulse of the sea,
So the current of my being,
"Neath the eye of the All-seeing,
Loses in its unity

National Era

THE OLD MAN'S STORY.

I shall never forget the commencement of the temperance reform I was a child at the time, of some ten years of age. Our home had every comfort, and my parents idolized me, their child. Wine was often on the table, and both my father and mother frequently gave it to me in the bottom of the glass.

One Sunday at church, a startling announcement was made to our people. I know nothing of its import, but there was much whispering among the men. The pastor said that on the next evening there would be a meeting, and an address upon the evils of intemperance in the use of alcoholic drinks. He expressed himself ignorant of the object of the meeting, and could not say what course it would be best to pursue in the matter.

The subject of the meeting came up at our table after the service, and I questioned my father about it with all the curious eagerness of a child. The whisper and words which had been dropped in my hearing clothed the whole affair in a great mystery to me, and I was all eagerness to learn the same strange thing.

My father said it was some scheme to unite church and state.

The night came, and troops of people gathered on the tavern steps, and I heard the jest and the laugh, and saw drunken men reeling out of the barroom. I urged my father to let me go, but he refused. Finally, thinking it would be an innocent gratification of my curiosity, he put on his hat and we passed across the green to the church. I remember well how the people appeared as they came in, seeming to wonder what kind of an exhibition was to be made of.

In the corner was the tavern keeper, and around him a number of friends.

For an hour the people of the place continued to come in, until there was a fair house full:—All were curiously watching the door, wondering what would next appear. The pastor stole in and took a seat behind a pillar under the gallery, as if doubtful of the propriety of being there at all.

Two men finally came in, and went to the altar and took their seats. All eyes were fixed upon them, and a general stillness prevaded the house.

The men were unlike in appearance, one being short and thick set in build, the other tall and well formed. The younger had the manner and dress of a clergyman, a full, round face, and quiet, good natured look, as he leisurely looked around the audience.

But my childish interest was all in the old man. His broad, deep chest and unusual height; looking giant-like as he strode up the aisle. His hair was white, his brow deeply seamed with furrows, and around his handsome mouth, lines of calm and touching sadness. His eye was black and restless, and kindled as the tavern keeper uttered a low jest aloud. His lips were compressed, and a crimson flush went and came over his pale cheek. One arm was off above the elbow, and there was a wide scar over the right eye.

The younger finally arose, and stated the object of the meeting, and asked if there was a clergyman present to open with a prayer.

Our pastor kept his seat, and the speaker himself made a short prayer, and then made a short address; at the conclusion calling upon any one present to make remarks.

The pastor rose under the gallery, and attacked the position of the speaker, using the argument which I have often heard since, and concluded by denouncing those engaged in the new movement as meddlesome fanatics, who wished to break up the time honored usages of good society, and injure the business of respectable men. At the conclusion of his remarks, the tavern keeper and his friends got up a cheer, and the current of feeling was evidently against the strangers and their plan.

While the pastor was speaking, the old man had fixed his dark eye upon him, and leaned forward as if to catch every word.

As the pastor took his seat, the old man arose, his tall form towering in its symmetry, and his chest swelling as he inhaled his breath through his thin, dilated nostrils. To me, at that time, there was something awe inspiring and grand in the appearance of the old man, as he stood with his full eye upon the audience, his teeth shut hard, and a silence like that of death throughout the church.

He bent his gaze upon the tavern keeper, and that peculiar eye lingered and kindled for half a moment.

The scar grew red upon his forehead, and beneath the heavy eye brows his eyes glittered and glowed like those of a serpent. The tavern keeper quailed before the searching glance and I felt a relief when the old man withdrew his gaze. For a moment he seemed lost in thought, and then in a low and tremulous tone commenced.—There was a depth in that voice, a thrilling pathos and sweetness, which riveted every heart in the house, before the first period had been rounded. My father's attention had become fixed on the speaker with an interest which I had never before seen him exhibit. I can but briefly remember the substance of what the old man said, though the scene is as vivid before me as any that I ever witnessed.

"My friends!—I am a stranger in your village, and I trust I may call you friends. A star has arisen, and there is hope in the dark night which hangs like a pall of gloom over our country." With a thrilling depth of voice the speaker continued: "O, God, thou who lookest with compassion upon the most erring of earth's children, I thank the that a brazen serpent has been lifted, upon which the drunkard can look and be helped; that a beacon has burst out upon the darkness that surrounds him, which shall guide back to honor and heaven the bruised and weary wanderer."

It is strange what power there is in some voices. The speaker was slow and unmoved, but a tear trembled in every eye, and before I knew why, a tear dropped upon my hand; followed by others like rain drops. The old man brushed one from his own eyes, and continued:

"Men and Christians! You have just heard that I am a vagrant and fanatic. I am not.—As God knows my own sad heat, I came here to do good. Hear me and be just;

"I am an old man, standing alone, at the end of life's journey, there is a deep sorrow in my heart, and tears in my eyes. I have journeyed over a dark and beaconless ocean, and life's hopes have been wrecked. I am without friends, home or kindred upon earth, and look with longing to the rest of the night of death. Without friends, kindred or home! It was not so once!"

No one could withstand the touching pathos of the old man. I noticed a tear trembling on the lid of my father's eye, and I was no more ashamed of my own.

"No, my friends, it was not so once? Away over the dark waves which have wrecked my hopes, there is a blessed light of happiness and home; I reach again convulsively for the shrines of the household idols that once were, but now mine no more."

The old man seemed looking through fancy upon some bright vision, his lips apart and fingers extended. I involuntarily turned in the direction where it was pointed, dreading to see some shadow evolved by its movements.

"I once had a mother. With her heart crushed with sorrow, she went down to the grave! I once had a wife—a fair angel creature as ever smiled in an earthly home. Her eyes as mild as a summer sky, and her heart as faithful and true as ever guarded and cherished a husband's love. Her blue eyes grew dim as the floods of sorrow washed away their brightness, and the living heart was wrung until every fibre was broken. I once had a noble, a brave and beautiful boy, but he was driven out from the ruins of his home, and my old heart yearns to know if he lives.—I once had a babe—a sweet, tender bud on bosom, but my hands destroyed it, and it lies with One who loves children:

"Do not be startled, friends: I am not a murderer in the common acceptance of the term. Yet there is a light in my evening sky. A spirit mother rejoices over the return of her prodigal son. The wife smiles upon him who again turns back to virtue and honor. The child angel visits me at night, and I feel the hallowing touch of a tiny palm upon my feverish cheek. My brave boy, if he yet lives, would forgive the sorrowing old man for the treatment which drove him into the world, and the blow that maimed him for life. God forgive me for the ruin I have brought upon me and mine."

He again wiped a tear from his eye. My father watched him with a strang interest, and a countenance unusually pale and excited by some strange emotion.

"I was once a fanatic, and madly followed the malign light which led me to ruin. I was a fanatic when I sacrificed my wife, children, happiness and home, to the accursed demon of the bowl. I once adored the gentle being whom I injured so deeply.

"I was a drunkard. From respectability and affluence, I plunged into degradation and poverty. I dragged my family down with me. For years I saw her cheek pale, and her step grow weary. I left her alone amid the wreck of her home, and revised at the tavern. She never complained; yet she and the children went hungry for bread.

"One new year's night I returned late to my hut where charity had given us a roof. She was yet up and shivering over the coals. I asked food, but she burst into tears, and told me there was none. I fiercely ordered her to get some. She turned her eyes sadly upon me, and tears falling fast over her pale cheek. At this moment the child in the cradle awoke and broke up a famishing wail, startling the despairing mother like a serpent's sting.

"We have no food, James, I have been sick for several days. I have nothing for myself. My once kind husband, must we starve?"

"That sad, pleading face, and those sorrowing eyes, and the feeble wail of the child mixed in me, and I—yes I—struck her a fierce blow in the face, and she fell forward upon the hearth. The furies of hell boiled in my bosom, and with deeper intensity as I felt I had committed a wrong I had never struck Mary before, but some terrible impulse bore me on, and I stooped as well as I could in my drunken state, and clenched both hands in her hair.

"'God of mercy, James!' exclaimed my wife, as she looked up in my fiendish countenance 'you will not kill us, you will not harm Willie,' and she sprang to the cradle, and grasped him to her embrace. I caught her again by the hair, and dragged her to the door, and as I lifted the latch, the wind burst in with a cloud of snow.—With the yell of a fiend, I still dragged her on, and hurried her out into the storm. With a wild ha! ha! I closed the door and turned the button, he pleading moans mingling with the wail of the blast and sharp cry of her babe. But my work was not complete.

"I turned to the little bed where lay my eldest son, and I snatched him from his slumbers; and against his half wakened struggles, opened the door and thrust him out. In the agony of fear he called to me by a name I was no longer fit to bear, and locked his fingers into my side pocket. I could not wrench that frenzied grasp away, and with the coldness of a devil as I was, shut the door upon his arm, and with my knife severed it at the wrist.

The speaker ceased a moment, and buried his face in his hands, as it to shut out some fearful dream, and his deep chest heaved like a storm-swept sea. My father had arisen from his seat, and was leaning forward, his countenance bloodless, and the large drops standing out upon his brow. Chills crept back to my young heart, and I wished I was at home. The old man looked up, and I never have since beheld such mortal agony pictured upon a human face as there was on his.

"It was morning when I awoke, and the storm had ceased, but the cold was intense. I first secured a drink of water, and then looked in the accustomed place for Mary. As I missed her for the first time, a shadowing sense of some horrible nightmare began to dawn upon my wandering mind. I thought I had a fearful dream, but I involuntarily opened the outside door with a shuddering dread. As the door opened, the snow burst in, followed by the fall of something across the threshold, scattering the snow and striking the floor with a sharp, bad sound. My blood shot like red hot arrows though my veins, and I rubbed my eyes to keep out the sight. It was—O God, how horrible! it was my own injured Mary and her babe frozen to ice! The ever true mother had bowed herself over the child to shield it, her own person stark and bare to the storm.

"She had placed her hair over the face of the child, and the sleet had frozen it to the white cheek. The frost was white in its half opened eyes and upon its tiny fingers. I know not what became of my brave boy."

Again the old man bowed his head and wept, and all that were in the house wept with him.—My father sobbed like a child. In tones of low and heart broken pathos, the old man concluded:

"I was arrested, and for long months raved in delirium. I awoke, was sentenced to prison for ten years, but no tortures could have been like those I endured within my own bosom. O God, no—I am not a fanatic. I wish to injure no one. But while I live, let me strive to warn others not to enter the path which has been so dark a one to me."

The old man sat down, but a spell as deep and strong as that wrought by some wizard's breath rested upon the audience. Hearts could have been heard in their beating, and tears to fall.—The old man then asked the people to sign the pledge. My father leaped from his seat, and snatched at it eagerly. I had followed him; and as he hesitated a moment with pen in the ink, a tear fell from the old man's eye on the paper.

"Sign it, sign it, young man. Angels would sign it, I would write my name there ten thousand times in blood if it would bring back my loved and lost ones."

My father wrote "MORTIMER HUDSON."—The old man looked, wiped his tearful eyes, and looked again, his countenance alternately flushed with a red and death like paleness.

"It is—no, it cannot be: yet how strange," muttered the old man. "Pardon me, sir, but that was the name of my brave boy."

My father trembled, and held up the left arm, from which the hand had been severed.

They looked for a moment in each other's eyes both recled and gasped:

"My own injured son!"

"My father!"

They fell upon each other's neck and wept, until it seemed that their souls would grow and mingle into one. There was weeping in that church and sad faces around me.

"Let me thank God for this great blessing which has gladdened my guilt hardened soul!" he poured out his heart in one of the most melting prayers I ever heard. The spell was then broken, and all eagerly signed the pledge, slowly going to their homes, as if loth to leave the spot.

The old man is dead, but the lesson he taught his erring child on his knee, on his evening, will went down without a cloud, will never be forgotten.

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AT THE OLD STAND.

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No. 2, State street, directly opposite Brown's Hotel, a new and [illegible] stock of

GROCERIES,
Wooden & Willow Ware, Provisions,

[illegible] to his old customers and the public generally, that he has [illegible] SUGARS [illegible] and selling low for CASH, hoping by strict attention to business, and a desire to please, to receive a liberal share of the [illegible]

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Erie, Nov. 1, 1856.

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Erie, Nov. 1, 1856. 41

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HAVE JUST RECEIVED a large and extensive stock of Prime Groceries, which I offer to the public at large. I stand ready to dismiss [illegible] and must compel the assortment of GROCERIES [illegible] Liberal inducements to customers, offered by no [illegible] and I ask one and all to call and testify to the [illegible] and cheap groceries can be sold, at

JOS. A. STERRETT'S,
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CRUSHED, GRANULATED, POWDERED, AND BROWN SUGARS.

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COFFEE.

[illegible] Coffee, a cup of which you may drink [illegible] and [illegible] with very much comfort. Its [illegible] and [illegible] Coffee, and is [illegible] in quantities that will surprise [illegible] and please you.

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[illegible] Syrup, Molasses, Vinegar, Spices, Starch, Indigo, [illegible] for the Families in my line of business, you [illegible] and [illegible] and all goods at small prices [illegible] the world and the rest can't be asked. Recollect Stepnell [illegible] and see how cheap groceries can be sold, at

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BEGS leave respectfully to announce to the public that he has [illegible] stock of everything desirable in his line, of popular supply the wants of everybody, and [illegible] a continuance of fair dealing, selling cheap and giving [illegible] to the business, he will be enabled [illegible] the trade of former patrons of this House, [illegible] of which he will [illegible] Please give him a call at the

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