

REFORM.

AN ADDRESS

TO THE

WORKING CLASSES.

BY ONE OF THEMSELVES.

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REFORM.

IN this age of progress, the country abounds with movements of a benevolent, charitable, moral and social elevating, and gospel-spreading tendency; which are productive of very much good and call for the blessing of Providence and the earnest help of every Christian who desires the welfare of his fellow-men. Many of these movements are for the elevation of the working classes, and demand the gratitude of the "sons of toil." All will readily admit that the most effectual way of rooting out the evils which are the object of these movements, is, to remove, as far as lies within our power, the greatest and most apparent *cause* of those evils,—to seek out the cause, and then to remove it as soon as possible; else, if this be not done, the evils will still continue, although they may be *very slowly* on the decrease.

Now, it is admitted on all hands that drunkenness—or rather the drinking usages of the people—is the cause of more evils than any other known agency. Therefore, this fact being granted and proved as it is, we draw the conclusion that no movement is more worthy of the warm-hearted support and co-operation of all who wish the amelioration of mankind than the Temperance movement. If this cause, and that which it seeks to vanquish, be given a fair and impartial

investigation, all will admit,—as if this was done it would be impossible to be otherwise,—that it is a cause in which it is the duty of every Christian to take his rank, and to fight—not as the soldier of war, seeking with the edge of the sword, to destroy men's lives,—but with an unswerving zealously to *save* men's lives, health, fortune, welfare, and souls; to fight with unslackened energy,—gaining additional strength from the fact that the traffickers feel that their power is fast approaching to a close, and that their days are, as it were, numbered,—to fight with a giant's power for the total destruction of the sway which alcohol has for so many ages most tyrannically held.

Among the objections raised by “moderate drinkers” against following the total abstinence plan, they will say that they can take a *little* without “abusing” it, and without being any worse for what they take. Now moderation is one of the most deceitful things it is easy to conceive: it promises much that is all very well, but how oft has it broken those promises, and blasted and ruined thousands of promising youths! Nothing need be plainer than this fact, that moderation has led to all the drunkenness in the world. The first glass is the starting-point to the asylum, the workhouse, the prison, the gallows, and a drunkard's premature grave: it is the date from whence thousands, who were once useful members of society and very promising characters, can and have traced their ultimate degradation and ruin. It must not for a moment be considered that all are “fools” who fall the victims to intemperance. Some of the greatest orators and statesmen, the cleverest wits, the leading journalists and writers, and the best and sweetest of poets, have led a most reckless and dissipated life: for instance, Lord Byron, Sheridan, Dr. Maginn, Burns, Charles Lamb, Coleridge, and numerous others. It enslaves and ruins the most generous-hearted and noble-minded of characters; and has not failed even in seizing and hurling from the pulpit some of the most pious and eloquent, the most respected and beloved of Ministers

of CHRIST. Even granting that you are on perfectly safe ground; if you desire to persuade others from the ways of intemperance, your own example certainly stands in the way. It is one of the most truthful of sayings, that "example teaches better than precept." The power of example is most influential, and is especially required of Christians. The Rev. J. Wesley says, "If you say it 'is not poison to me,' then, I say, throw it away for thy brother's sake, lest thou embolden him to drink also."

"I pity the man that can't feel for another—
 Who will not abstain for the sake of his brother;
 Yes, I pity the man, whatso'er be his creed,
 His mind must be narrow or callous indeed."

Another objection, and one which is frequently urged, is, that a little liquor is strengthening; and that a hard-working man cannot perform his labour without more or less strong drink. Now, my dear reader, you cannot be labouring under a greater delusion. What strengthening property can there be in these drinks, when it has been proved that in a gallon of ale, for which you will pay about eighteenpence, there is no more nourishment than in a pennyworth of bread! and to make compensation for the little nourishment there is in it, what mischievous properties are there? How can that be strengthening, to persons in health, which is a slow, but, at the same time, a most sure poison? Living animals, such as dogs, &c., have been given alcohol, and been killed on the spot by small quantities. Now, can that which will instantaneously kill a dog be any less a poison to man? Does it appear consistent with common sense to say that that which sends a man staggering and reeling along the street—and when he falls not being able to raise himself—can be strengthening, however moderately taken? The supposition of such a thing is absurd in the extreme. Among the millions who are acting upon the total abstinence plan in all parts of the world are blacksmiths, forgemen, farmers,

tailors, shoemakers, colliers, sailors, soldiers ; in fact, men of every rank, trade and profession, in all climates, on land and sea, who perform the most severe labour without the use of strong drink ; and have endured hardships which could not have been gone through with them. The celebrated African missionary, the Rev. R. Moffatt, says—"My severest missionary labours were performed without strong drink." In No. 15 of the *British Workman* (which is one of the very best friends with which the working man can make himself acquainted) is a very interesting testimony signed by a large number of blacksmiths in various parts of the country, who, having tried the total abstinence plan, many of them for a number of years, declare that they have performed their hard labour better, and been better in every respect, since they have abandoned the use of these accursed drinks, than they previously were. Dr. South says,— "Abstinence is the best friend to man's mind." Many of the highest of the medical profession also declare that if all were abstainers the number of their patients would be greatly diminished. Dr. Conquest observes that "the majority of diseases may be traced to intoxicating liquors." When it is considered that we have the testimony of two thousand medical men, testifying that intoxicating drinks are not only useless, but highly injurious, to persons in health ; and that there are persons of all trades, in all parts of the country, who clearly prove, beyond the least shadow of a doubt, that all kinds of labour, both mental and physical, *can* be performed much better without them ; this objection is sufficiently answered.

Again : another objection which is urged by professors of religion, is, that total abstinence is contrary to the teachings of Scriptures, and that malt is one of the good gifts of Providence. Now, I am no theologian, and shall not, therefore, give such an answer as the subject deserves. Malt, however, is *not* one of God's gifts : the manufacturing of malt is despising one of His bountiful gifts, and making it worse than

useless—turning it into the most damning article that ever cursed the earth, which does more towards the ruin and everlasting destruction of the souls of men than any other system. It is the barley which is the good gift of the Almighty ; but it was intended to be food for man, and not poison. The manufacture and sale of strong drinks involve a great violation of the Sabbath, numbers being engaged in malting alone on that day. This “distilled damnation” is, in fact, the source of a most lamentable amount of violation of the laws of GOD. Neither is abstinence contrary to the teachings of Scripture. The whole of the teachings and precepts of CHRIST are one continual stream of unparalleled love towards man ; and the doctrines of the Temperance reformation are in perfect conformity with them throughout. “Love thy neighbour as thyself.” Does an anti-teetotaler love his neighbour as himself? Does he show that love towards his brother which is expected of Christians? Let me entreat you, dear reader, to consider this in a right spirit. The plan of teetotalism is also consistent with the writings of the Apostle Paul. “It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.” It is a lamentable fact for the consideration of Christians, that the English and other European nations should have been the means of introducing these soul-destroying drinks into the uncivilized countries of the world. A chief of one of the Red Indian tribes some years ago said to an English gentleman,—“Before your countrymen did come to our tribes, bringing *fire waters*, many of our Indians did live one hundred years, but now very few do live sixty years.” I maintain that the Almighty, in his unbounded love and mercy, never gave to man that which destroys the very powers by which He placed him above all other living creatures—his reasoning faculties and intellect,—and which sinks him, instead of being a “little lower than the angels,” far beneath the level of the meanest brute in all creation.

The vilest serpent or even the meanest insect is far

more noble than a drunkard. They are fulfilling the end for which they were created; while he sets at naught, and even curses, the blessings and enjoyments which are everywhere lavished around him. I have read in the *British Workman*, an anecdote of a man named John Godfrey, who was upwards of twenty years ago at the wharf of a coal merchant on the Surrey side of London, who had a dog which he taught to drink male liquor. On one occasion, when Godfrey with one of his companions visited a beershop, it was agreed upon to make the dog drunk, which was accordingly done. When they arrived where Godfrey lived, the animal could not ascend the stairs, falling down as fast as he got up, which afforded much amusement to the two companions: but the dog would never afterwards taste the drink, showing his teeth and snarling whenever a publican's pot was presented to him. John Godfrey afterwards died in the workhouse; but his companion, after having been frequently told by his wife that he had not "half the sense of Jack Godfrey's dog," ultimately signed the pledge, joined himself to a Christian church, and became a useful member of society. Now, whether did the dog or his master display the most wisdom? If men would only follow the example of this brute, and when they first feel the effects of these drinks (if not before), would immediately abandon them, what misery, want, woe, crime, and suffering might thus be saved!

The sum annually spent in intoxicating drinks in Great Britain is £60,000,000 sterling; of which sum £25,000,000 is wasted by the working classes, who can so ill afford thus to squander their hard-earned money. What would this enormous sum provide for the comfort and benefit of the masses, of which, chiefly from this evil, they are so frequently deprived? The drinking habits of the people are at the root of four-fifths of the crime, four-fifths of the pauperism, three-fourths of the insanity, and a great majority of the evils which beset the working classes. When we take into account the accidents, suicides, and prema-

ture deaths, directly or indirectly the result of this vice—of which there are 40,000 annually, whose souls are thus brought (frequently without the least preparation) before the tribunal of their Maker ; together with the rest of the incalculable mischief resulting from the traffic ; and the souls of those engaged in the traffic, who are nothing short of murderers and destroyers of themselves and their fellow-men ; surely these facts ought to make all right-feeling men consider the matter in a true Christian spirit.

To bring the long and blood-stained career of alcohol to a close it requires a two-fold work—“moral suasion” and “prohibition.” We must urge *law* against the *traffic*, and *moral suasion* against the *vice*,—persuasion for the drinker, and prohibition for the trafficker. Now, both moral suasion and prohibition are one and the same movement, both seeking the same end ; only the first endeavours more particularly to persuade all classes from the drinking habits ; while the latter is working to remove temptations out of the way of those whose resolution is not sufficiently strong to withstand them, and to bring legislative suppression for the protection of those who would otherwise be led astray. Whatever good may be effected by suasion, something further is required. Numbers who have signed the pledge, and have formed very strong resolutions to have no more dealings with the monster, so deeply has the degraded habit acquired the mastery over them, that they have before long returned to their old ways ; while, if, immediately upon their resolution, the temptations had been removed, the case would have been altogether different. Strong drink creates a confirmed appetite for itself. Dr. Cheyne mentions a case of a very amiable and popular gentleman, who had acquired habits of intemperance : on one occasion, after having been remonstrated with by a friend, he replied, “My good friend, your remarks are just : they are indeed too true ; but I can no longer resist temptation : if a bottle of brandy stood on one hand, and the pit of hell yawned on the

other ; and if I were convinced that I should be pushed in as surely as I took one glass more, I could not refrain." What the state of a man must be who has thus sunk, he alone can tell who has experienced it. Societies are formed all over the country for the protection of "licensed victuallers." Does not this plainly show that there is need of protection in order to keep the trade "respectable." Yes, they are licensed, and what to do?—

"Licensed to make the strong man weak,
 Licensed to lay the wise man low ;
 Licensed the wife's fond heart to break,
 And cause her children's tears to flow.

Licensed to do their neighbour harm,
 To kindle discord, hate, and strife ;
 Licensed to nerve the robber's arm ;
 Licensed to whet the murderer's knife.

Licensed where peace and comfort dwell,
 To bring disease, and want, and woe ;
 Licensed to make this world a hell,
 And fit men for the hell below."

Is it just and right for the state to sanction and legalize a trade that is such a prolific source of evil as the liquor traffic? Is it not the especial duty of the government and the country to suppress every system which is known to tend to the degradation, vice, and ruin of the people. The man is not living who is able to calculate the benefit in every way which would result was the liquor traffic to be stopped. There are upwards of thirty parishes in Scotland without either a public-house or beershop ; and in many of these districts there is not a single penny of poor rate, and crime is very rare. In those parts of America where the sale of intoxicating liquors has been prohibited, the change in the country for the better has been almost marvellous. Crime has been very materially lessened, jails having been empty which were previously crowded ; pauperism has been vastly diminished ; the

public rates and taxes have been greatly reduced ; and the moral and social condition of the people has been decidedly improved. Moral suasion and prohibition must go hand in hand—not as enemies, but as friends and helpers—in order to gain the complete success of the work ; and then, ere long, under the blessing of God, may it be sung in its truest and fullest sense—

“The cottage homes of England !
 By thousands on her plains,
 They are smiling o'er the silvery brook,
 And round the hamlet fanes :
 From glowing orchards forth they peep,
 Each from its nook of leaves ;
 And fearless there the lowly sleep,
 As the bird beneath their eaves.”

Now, it cannot be denied that great and glorious works have been and are being accomplished for the amelioration of the working classes : but, much as may be done for their elevation by the higher classes, by far the greater portion of the work is to be done by *themselves*. Whatever may be attempted for their benefit by others, unless they second those efforts and help themselves to some extent, it will avail little. At the late Social Science Meeting at Liverpool, for the consideration of the means whereby to better the condition of the working classes, which was addressed by several noblemen, it was brought forward that unless they showed some determination to raise themselves from their present low position, and to put forth their own efforts in co-operation with those which are everywhere being made for their moral and social elevation, but little will be accomplished for their permanent and lasting welfare : and at this meeting it was also shown that no other evil stood more in their way than—**DRINK**. The Earl of Shaftesbury—that noble-hearted friend of the people—says, that this system is at the root of nineteen-twentieths of the evils which beset them. You may cry out about parliamentary reform, and ex-

tension of the franchise, &c.; but that reform which is most needful, and would most tend to benefit you in every possible manner, is your own. Much noise as you make about your oppression and taxation, you pay very little attention to your self-laid oppression and taxation. If you only looked more after this, you would find that a great amount of the burdens are laid upon you, directly or indirectly, through your own means.

Fellow working men, look to your true interests and welfare! Look at the subject which I have thus faintly described in the true spirit of Englishmen and Christians. Do not scoff at the idea and ridicule it, until you have found just cause to do so. Do not say sneeringly, "You are not going to make me a teetotaler." Examine the system in its full length and breadth—sift it in every corner; and if you find the doctrines of the Temperance movement to be the truth, it is for your everlasting welfare and prosperity to have no further dealings with the monster, and to exert your utmost power to hurl the fetters of the tyrant at your feet. Show, by your undaunted and unflinching exertions on every hand, that it is your determination that alcohol shall be banished from the land for ever; for until the country is entirely rid of the "plague of our isle," never will Britain know the real value and enjoyment of Liberty and Freedom!

"Ho, friends of virtue! wake to glory!
 What precious interests bid you rise!
 From gloomy prisons hear the story;
 See widows' tears—hear orphans' cries:
 Shall heartless men, the death-fires feeding,
 Send drunken maniacs through the land,
 A ruffian horde, a lawless band,
 While all that makes life dear lies bleeding?
 Up, heroes, take the field!
 The Freeman's weapons wield!
 Press on, press on, all hearts resolved,
 The world shall yet be free!

Spirit of law, can man resign thee,
 Once having felt thy generous flame?
 Can party schemes or gold confine thee?
 Can one defeat thine efforts tame?
 Too long the world has wept, bewailing
 The blood-stained sword the oppressors wield:
 The MAINE LAW is our sword and shield;
 And now their schemes are unavailing.
 Rouse, virtuous men, arouse!
 Redeem your Temperance vows!
 Press on, press on, all hearts resolved,
 All nations shall be free!

From East to West resounds the story,
 'The Temperance banner proudly waves;'
 MAINE taught the world the march of glory,
 Her gallant sons no longer slaves!
 With light and love full long they pleaded;
 But when the LAW in thunder spoke,
 It burst their chains with lightning stroke,
 And peace and happiness succeeded.
 Then swell the choral strain,
 All hail the LAW OF MAINE!
 Rejoice, rejoice, Truth shall prevail,
 And all the world be free!"

