

## TEMPERANCE COLUMN.

## HIGHER-CLASS VICTIMS.

In speaking of intemperance, we generally confine our remarks to lower-class people. We talk of excessive drinking among mechanics and labourers, among carmen and porters. We commiserate the drunken soldier and the drunken sailor, and we expend much sympathy upon the inebriates among our pauper and criminal classes.

All this is right. But it should not stand alone. We cannot be too anxious to prevent the spread of alcoholic excess among the persons just mentioned, nor can we make a too strenuous effort to rescue from ruin those of them who have fallen into this lamentable vice. But we should not speak of them as if they only were sinners as regards the excessive use of drink. To insinuate such a notion would be grossly untrue, and it would be unjust to the upper classes, who are as much in danger as those below them, and who stand in aid of such helps and safeguards as our Temperance principles and agencies can give them.

Indeed, it is but too true that many of the upper middle classes, and of those whose social position is higher, have already yielded to the Syren song of the charmer, and have imbibed so freely of the Circean cup of strong drink as to have it sorrowfully brought home—though, alas! too late—to both themselves and their afflicted friends, that "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging, and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."

Our national drink bill is phenomenally high. Among ordinary items of expenditure it is like a baleful comet amid commonplace meteors, or like a drowning crocodile amid the minnows of the Nile. Last year it amounted to the enormous sum of nearly 125 millions sterling, by far the largest portion of which was paid by the well-to-do and the wealthy classes, whose pecuniary resources enabled them to dissipate considerable sums in the purchase of expensive wines and brandies. Archdeacon Farrar told us a few years ago, that of our drink bill, which he computed at 150 millions, 38 millions was paid by the working classes, or about one-fourth of the whole, and, supposing that their proportion of the sum expended by the nation on alcohol is now what it then was, the amount of drink consumed and paid for by the upper classes is startlingly great. Moreover, their expenditure on intoxicating beverages seems to increase; for, last year, the outlay upon wine—a liquor in which the working classes seldom indulge—compared with the amount spent upon it the year before, shows an increase of £397,775.

It is, therefore, not to be wondered at that, at the close of a meeting held in the city mansion of the Duke of Westminster, on behalf of temperance, a lady of rank who was present, addressing herself to Canon Ellison, said, that during the meeting she had difficulty in refraining from uttering a protest against the speakers, all of whom seemed to talk of intemperance as if it was a vice peculiar to the masses of the people, while it left the classes unscathed by its influence, and free from its guilt. Moreover, this same lady then and there gave the names of a number of persons of position, women as well as men, who, sad to relate, are not only occasional but habitual drunkards.

Such facts are deeply to be lamented. They illustrate and press home upon our hearts that the morbid and delirious craving for alcohol is not confined to the bloated and stupefied drayman, or to the ill-clad and infatuated labourer or mechanic, who, after spending his week's earnings in the gin-shop, reels to his miserable home, to the terror of his anxious and heart-broken wife and of his squalid and famishing children. No; these facts furnish proof that the rich as well as the poor, the high born as well as the lowly, are being tormented by this unnatural and insatiable appetite; and that neither exalted social position, education, or cultured refinement is, of itself, a barrier to its degrading and criminal indulgence.

And that this is no rash and censorious inference we have but too ample evidence. We have the disinterested testimony of those whose opportunities of knowing are abundant, and whose benevolence and

candour do not admit of a shadow of doubt. What right-hearted person will not be touched, if not affected to tears, by such a testimony from Archdeacon Farrar as this:—"At the entrance of one of our college chapels lies a nameless grave; that grave covers the mortal remains of one of its most promising fellows, ruined through drink. I received, not long ago, a letter from an old schoolfellow, a clergyman, who, after long labours, was in want of clothes and almost of food. I inquired the cause: it was drink. A few weeks ago, a wretched clergyman came to me in deplorable misery, who had dragged down his family with him into ruin. What had ruined him? Drink! While I was at Cambridge, one of the most promising scholars, when a youth, years ago, died in a London hospital, of delirium tremens, through drink. When I was at King's College, I used to sit next to a handsome youth, who grew up to be a brilliant writer. He died in the prime of life, a victim of drink!" Sir A. Clark, than whom no man ought to know better, informs us that "more than three-fourths of the disorders, in what we call *fashionable life*, arise from the use of alcohol." Sir James Hannen informs us that "seventy-five out of every hundred divorce cases have their origin in intemperance." And we know that cases of divorce are generally among the well-to-do and the upper classes.

Such testimonies might be multiplied, but surely it is needless. Our intelligent readers will not need to be reminded that in some of the lowest lodging-houses of our towns and cities there are to be found, amid rags, and filth, and starvation, men belonging to good families and learned professions, and who have been dragged down to these abodes of vice and wretchedness by their unrestrained love of strong drink. And who is it, having been long engaged in public and professional life, has not seen the well-born and refined lady drunk in her own house; or, having been driven through drink from her once luxurious surroundings and loving relatives, the inmate of an inebriate home, a lunatic asylum, or a workhouse?

If, then, the poor and the less-favoured classes of society have an interest in the Temperance movement, so have the rich. Temperance societies and their movements concern the upper classes as well as the lower. Intemperance, like a contagious and epidemic disease, is no respecter of persons. Like a potent and murderous Polyphemus, it not only victimises the lowly, but it enters the fashionable club, the mansion, the manor-house, and smites and devours the head of the family, the wife and mother, or one or more of those beloved children that, like promising olive plants, surround and gladden the family table.

On the principle of self-preservation, then, if from no nobler motive, the higher classes should heartily aid us in our Temperance work. The cause is not only ours, it is also theirs. The fire that is consuming their neighbours' houses may soon reach their own. Let them out and give help. Let them put their hands to the engine, and endeavour to stay the alcoholic flames. Let them not, Nero-like, fiddle while Rome is ablaze. Those of them who are disposed to say, "Am I my brother's keeper?" should remember that, in a very important sense, they are their own keepers, and that they are the guardians of the character and happiness of beloved relatives, who are dearer to them than even their own lives. Let them put away all temptations to intemperance, or at least show *practical sympathy* with those who are endeavouring to do so. A little Christian self-denial cannot harm them. And if already some such persons feel a *proneness* to yield to the fascinations of the wine cup, let them, for the sake of all that is dear to them, both in this world and in the world to come, follow the wise and beneficent teachings of our Society, as Lot followed the instructions of the angels. Let them, while as yet they may, imitate the wisdom of the man who chose to sever himself from all that was dear to him in Sodom rather than perish in its flames.—*The Temperance Chronicle (England)*.

Another Subscriber in Nova Scotia writes:—"The contents are generally very useful as well as interesting, and the CHURCH GUARDIAN as handmaid to the Church is very much to be prized."

## WHAT DO PLAIN FACTS SAY AS TO MARRYING OUR WIVES' SISTERS?

(Marriage Law Defence Union Tracts, No. v.)

As the selfish persistence of a small knot of interested persons has again revived the agitation for legalising marriage with a wife's sister, I desire to place a few facts before plain people to help them in coming to a decision upon the question, which I shall look upon—(1) Religiously; (2) Socially; (3) Legally; (4) Historically, and (5) Practically. The hollowness and selfishness of the dreary agitation is shown by the fact that for more than a generation, and until very recently, when a few Members of Parliament have lent their names, the whole affair has been carried on by an anonymous society working through a salaried secretary. On the other hand, the defenders of the old Marriage law have never scrupled to publish their names, conscious as they are of the wide support of men, and still more of women, in every class of life who regard the proposal with horror; while the very repulsiveness of many of the considerations which the question provokes deters those who feel most deeply from speaking out publicly.

To come to our facts, and to look on the prospect opened to us of being able to marry our wives' sisters:—

First, *Religiously*.—The marriage law of England is based chiefly upon the teaching of Scripture by making the 'Levitical degrees' the rule of lawful and unlawful marriages. The advocates of the change go about shrieking that the Scriptural argument against the lawfulness of marriage with a wife's sister is given up, and that our table of prohibited degrees does not represent the Levitical rule. Both assertions are absolutely baseless.

The Levitical law is, of course, the law of the Old Covenant, given, as our Blessed Lord Himself tells us, when speaking on the relations of husband and wife, by Moses with a regard for the 'hardness of the hearts' of the Jews. It is less perfect and less strict than the perfect law of the Gospel. So, whenever any indulgence of man's passions is forbidden by the Levitical Law, so much the more will that action be forbidden in the Gospel; while, on the other hand, it is not so certain that whatever is not forbidden in the Law must, therefore, hold good under the Gospel. Divorce, as to which our Lord offered that explanation, is a case immediately in point; so is the connivance shown towards polygamy.

Keeping this truth in view, it is certain either that marriage with a wife's sister is forbidden in Leviticus, or else that Leviticus allows the foulest iniquity.

The table of prohibited degrees in Leviticus is framed on a consistent and intelligible principle—that of referring to each pair of corresponding degrees, such as father and daughter, or son and mother, nephew and father's sister, or nephew and mother's sister, and so on. Both of them are not always named, but occasionally one only is, while the other is left to be inferred. In the present case 'thy brother's wife' is named, but 'wife's sister' is left to be inferred. *The man who denies this inference will be bound to contend that there is no sin by the Jewish Law in a union of a man with his grandmother or with his daughter, because Leviticus passes over these degrees, and fixes its prohibition on a man marrying his granddaughter or his mother.*

(To be Continued.)

A Clerical subscriber in the Diocese of Toronto writes:—"Allow me once more to express my entire satisfaction with the tone of your valuable paper, and wish it continued success."