

THE CONTRAST.



WHAT HE WAS.



WHAT HE BECAME.

It is difficult for those who have not systematically *visited* amongst poor drunkards to form a just conception of the debasing influences of our drinking customs. The hardness of heart, the abandonment of all religious restraint, even by those who once knew the way of righteousness, and the extent to which infidel and blasphemous principles are fostered by the aid of intoxicating liquors, are beyond conception.

The following affecting instance was met with in York:—

On a Sabbath in 1848 on leaving the Wesley-place Sunday-school, and proceeding up Black Horse-passago, I met an emaciated creature, staggering at every footstep. Taking hold of him by the arm, I kindly remonstrated with him on his unhappy condition. Although he had been drinking at the public-house all the night, he was yet able to converse with considerable collectedness, but he had to make use of the wall to prevent him from falling. I soon found that I had encountered a man of considerable natural talent, and who had evidently once moved in better circumstances. He boastfully avowed himself an *infidel*, ridiculing all reference to the Bible and a future state of being, whilst he loudly protested that religion was all "humbug." Fixing my eyes steadily upon him, and still grasping his hand, I earnestly but affectionately said, "I have met with others who, like you, have ridiculed religion whilst they were in health, but who when death stared them in the face have wished me to pray with them; and in the last half-hour of your life, *DEATH* will make you think differently to what you now do." The awful look of despair, the gnashing of the teeth, the clenching of the fist, and the fearful oath with which he exclaimed, "That *DEATH* plagues me," I shall perhaps never forget.

In further conversation I endeavored to move him by referring to his departed mother. He became affected, and, with a deep sigh, exclaimed, "Ah! I was once a happy man."

From answers to inquiries, I found that he had been a member of a Christian church for *seventeen* years, but that during the last seven years he had been an unhappy "backslider."

I now assured him that there was still hope for him if he would abandon his ways, and return to Christ for pardoning

mercy. "You may again become a happy man," I assured him. "No, never! sir; it is *all over* now," he replied. After pleading with him to become a total abstainer from drink, as a step towards the right way, he exclaimed, "I never will! Every morning when I awake, *I am as miserable as man can be until I get some drink*, but when I've got it, then I'm as happy as any man in the world, and care for nothing."

On inviting him to accompany me to a place of worship, he said, "No sir; I shall never put my foot within either church or chapel again." On handing him a tract he refused it, and replied "I do not wish to insult you, sir; but I shall not read either it or the Bible, nor will I let any one read to me. *It is no use now.*" My heart yearned over the poor unhappy wanderer, but remonstrance seemed altogether unavailing.

When parting, I expressed a hope that he would, on reflection, adopt a new course of life. He shook my hand, and, with a quivering lip, exclaimed, "I thank you, sir; I know you wish me well, but I shall never alter now."

As I left him I thought I had never met with a more striking instance of the iron grasp with which intoxicating liquors seem, as it were, to "seal the ruin" of many of their victims. He was a man of superior abilities; he commenced life with a bright prospect of success; for many years he adorned a Christian profession; but he was a *moderate* drinker. The "bottle" and the "decanter" were in his house. Many of his Christian brethren had invited him to take "one glass" with them. *Imperceptibly* a love for drink was created.

Private prayer was now neglected; the house of God forsaken, relatives and those who had first emboldened him to drink now turned their backs upon him; until step by step, he sunk so low that he now fondly hoped there was no God to judge him, no heaven to gain, no hell to escape.

Parents! Brothers! Sisters! Sunday-school Teachers! Professing Christians! look at "THE CONTRAST;" see "WHAT HE WAS," and "WHAT HE BECAME;" and may the sight move you, as it moved me, to pledge myself to renewed exertion in promoting the Temperance cause.

—*Teetotal Times.*

T. B. SMITHIES.