

to indulge your own fancy or taste upon this subject, by taking a spoonful of brandy in your water, and some one stops you and tells you, if you indulge yourself with this small portion of spirit to-day, it will be the death of ten of your fellow-creatures to-morrow. Suppose he convinces and that this will actually be the case before to-morrow night, and solely in consequence of your indulgence; that one man will cut his own throat; that another will get drunk and murder his wife; that several tradesmen will fail in business, and come to the poor-house and ruin; and others to the gallows, and all in consequence of what you are about to do, could you, as a man of humanity and loving your neighbour as yourself, persist in your indulgence? Would you not rather renounce it, and all its supposed advantages, and run the risk of the doubtful question about the water being wholesome or unwholesome, without the addition of ardent spirit? Would you not rather put it away from you with indignation, and even endure the misery of thirst, rather than be the cause of so much greater misery to others?

*Half-Friend.*—Most assuredly, I would. But, my good temperance friend, how do you prove this extraordinary position of yours? It is impossible for you to show that my taking half a glass of brandy and water can produce any of those dreadful effects that you have described!

*Friend.*—Yes, indeed, but I can prove it. I can show that your conduct does lead to these results, not indeed directly and immediately as I have here stated it. I admit that these results are more indirect and remote; but I am prepared to show you that they are not on that account the less absolute and sure, and certain. And surely you will allow, that if two roads can be proved with equal certainty to lead to the same miserable and fatal conclusion, it signifies little that one of them is somewhat more circuitous, and the other more straight and direct. And if you lead your neighbour to ruin by the one road, you do him the same mischief as if you led him to the same ruin by the other. Indeed, the circuitous road is by far the most fatal and mischievous of the two, because it is more deceitful and ensnaring, and he who travels upon it may have no suspicion whether he is going, whereas the road that leads directly and immediately to the same ruinous end, does from that very circumstance give the traveller warning.

*Half-Friend.*—Well! I admit this reasoning. But how do you prove your point? How can you show that my moderate use of ardent spirit even indirectly contributes to the ruin and death of my fellow-creatures?

*Friend.*—I will show you. It has been proved, on the undoubted testimony of the judges of the land, of the physicians of our hospitals, of the wardens and marshals of our penitentiaries and jails, that more than half of all the diseases, three-fourths of all the poverty, and four-fifths of all the crime of England, owing to the use of ardent spirit. All the means that have hitherto been tried to arrest the pestilence, which is laying waste our country, to stem this torrent of vice and misery, have proved in vain. The doctrine of moderation has been proved, by experience, to be utterly unavailing. The use of ardent spirit, if admitted at all, has proved to be far too seductive and ensnaring to be used with any safety by the body of the people; and the line of demarcation between the moderate and immoderate use, too undefined to be any practical security. One only resource was left,—to try what total abstinence would do—to induce the people to lay aside the use of spirits altogether, and to brand their use with disgrace and infamy. Now it is positively in the power of all the sober and respectable of England, to accomplish this in an instant. From the very nature of man, and the known principles of his bosom, it is certain that a combination of all the sober and respectable of England, from the king on the throne down to the labourer in the fields, all uniting as one man, and protesting against the use of ardent spirit, would brand it with infamy in twenty-four hours; so that he who was about to drink it, would feel as if he were going to steal, and

would look anxiously around to see if anybody observed him. Man's bosom is so constructed, that he cannot stand the shame of that which the age in which he lives has pronounced to be disgraceful. To lecture the individua against the use of that which the nation deems respectable and creditable, is a hopeless task—it is so much breath wasted in the winds. But let the nation pronounce it disgraceful, and the thing is done: the judgment, and the feelings, too, of the individual, are carried away with the public opinion, and he cannot face the shame of opposing it. The immediate consequence would be, that ardent spirits would be used by none but hopeless drunkards. All those drinking customs, by which so many of the tradesmen and mechanics, the middle and lower orders of England, learn to be drunkards, would be abolished, and the doors of the school of intemperance would be closed for ever. The ranks of the intemperate would no longer be recruited from among the sober. As for the present generation of drunkards, the sexton and the grave-yard would soon provide a narrow home for them; and the scourge of drunkenness, and all its attendant calamities, would be driven from our native land. Thus it is positively, and undeniably, in the power of all the temperate of England, to brand this vice with infamy, and to put ardent spirits utterly out of caste, so that it shall come to be considered a crime to use them.

Now, if you persist in supporting the respectability of them by your example, you, so far as in you lies, do prolong their use, and mar and ruin the success of these endeavours, and prevent this blessed result; and all the crime, and poverty, and disease, and domestic misery, which would be prevented by the reign of universal temperance, you do your utmost to continue; and you are, to the extent of your influence, the guilty cause of them all. Thus that glass of brandy of yours has indirectly contributed to the death, not of ten, but countless thousands of your fellow-creatures.

*Half-Friend.*—I confess you have made out your case a great deal better than I expected; I cannot deny the force of your reasoning in general. Yet, somehow or other, two specific objections occur to my mind, which seem to me to throw a doubt on your conclusion. First, Why not form a distinct society against every other vice individually? Why expect that a society against drunkenness in particular will act as a kind of talisman in a degree that societies against any other vice would not act? And, secondly, do you not attribute intemperance too exclusively to the power of example? Do not all sins arise rather from the corruption of human nature? and is not intemperance, in this respect, on the same footing with them all? And does not this vice often proceed from a constitutional predisposition for the love of drink, rather than from example? And will you say that all constitutions are alike in this respect, or will your society put an end to that which arises from constitutional inclination?

*Friend.*—Societies for the suppression of other individual vices would doubtless be excellent things. But the reason why drunkenness is especially selected is, not because it is worse than any other sin, but because it is incomparably more prevalent; it has inundated England like a vast flood, and spread over our country like a pestilence; and it is absolutely necessary that every good man and every lover of his country should vigorously exert himself to put a stop to an evil which is daily and hourly increasing with such frightful rapidity. But there is another most conclusive reason why societies are formed against this vice individually and separately, rather than against any other. Intemperance is, in an especial manner, the parent of all the other vices, and of almost all the miseries of mankind. I repeat it, again, if you will believe the united testimony of all those who, from their situation, are most competent to judge—from the judge upon the bench, down to the keeper of the smallest village poor-house—you must admit that, with a few exceptions, intemperance is the mother of them all. It must be admitted, then, that, so far as this holds

true, the way to put an end to the further breeding of the progeny, is to strangle the parent. So here I have given you a double answer to your first objection.

*Half-Friend.*—I don't much like this close reasoning of yours; somehow, it does not make one feel very comfortable. You seem to be gaining ground upon me at every step. But what say you to my second objection, and the string of questions with which I have supported it? I think they will puzzle you.

*Friend.*—I admit that all sins arise from the corruption of human nature, and that the sin of intemperance is not an exception to this rule; but I deny that intemperance is 'precisely on the same footing with them all.' Particular circumstances do sometimes exceedingly tend to aggravate the effect of the corruption of human nature and to multiply them a thousand fold, and this is especially the case with respect to the vice of intemperance. There is no one vice which is in so great a degree a social vice. There is no vice which so eminently depends upon imitation, and the fashions and customs of society. The glass, by which many a thoughtless, unwary youth learns to be a drunkard, has, by common consent, appropriated to itself the name of the 'social glass;' and, as a company of unthinking boys, push it round the 'jovial board,' led on by what they conceive to be 'sparkling wit and the flow of soul;' they jeer and banter, and annoy one more wary than the rest, little thinking what a dreadful end may result from these foolish beginnings. I do not mean to say, that all constitutions are alike, and that one man does not more naturally and readily learn to drink than another; but I mean to say, that intemperance almost always begins, in the first instance, in imitation, and in the customs of that class of society where it most prevails, and ends in personal appetite and craving desire. And these customs are so universal, so tyrannous, that the spread of intemperance is so far from being wonderful, the wonder is that any escape the drunkard's end. There is not a manufactory, not a workshop, not a little knot of apprentices, in the mechanic arts in all England, that is not tyrannised over by their tyranny. Every new workman must drink his entrance; every new tool must be 'wetted;' every farewell to a departing comrade must be an excuse for drinking; bargains at fair or market, marriages, christenings, and even funerals in many counties, form ever-recurring reasons for indulgence in the glass; and what with man's strong inclination to imitate that which is done by his fellows—what with temptation ever in sight—what with persecution, or something next door to it, in these classes of society, the youth who would be sober finds it hard to escape being swept along by the general tide. And if, indeed, there be in some a natural propensity to drink, it is indeed taking coals to Newcastle, a work of mischievous supererogation to aggravate that propensity by such perpetual, and almost irresistible, incitements as these. And as soon as the incitements, and temptation, and almost compulsion, of these foolish customs are removed, it will be time enough to inquire how much is owing to an inevitable propensity to drink. I suspect this last will be found but very small in comparison; but there will be found to be all the difference in the world between the effect of this natural propensity; on the one hand, placed in perpetual temptation by these foolish customs, and the same propensity, on the other hand restrained and kept back by such a change in public opinion, as should bring all drinking customs into disgrace. And this change it is in the power of a union of all the sober, and all the respectable of England, to produce to-morrow, for they are the lords of public opinion. Public opinion is but their breath. They can, if they please, stamp spirit-drinking with disgrace and infamy to-morrow. The result here is positively and absolutely in their own hands. This is the object of temperance societies; and if all the respectable and sober of the land will unite, it will succeed with perfect