

A MOTHER'S GRIEF

To mark the sufferings of the babe,
That cannot speak its woe;
To see the infant tears gush forth,
Yet know not why they flow;
To meet the meek uplifted eye,
That fain would ask relief,
Yet can but tell of agony,—
This is a mother's grief!

Through dreary days, and darker nights,
To trace the march of death;
To hear the faint and frequent sigh,
The quick and shorten'd breath,
To watch the last dread strife draw near
And pray that struggle brief,
Though all is ended with its close—
This is a mother's grief!

To see, in one short hour, decay'd
The hope of future years,
To feel how vain a father's prayers,
How vain a mother's tears;
To think the cold grave now must close
O'er what was once the chief
Of all the treasured joys of earth—
This is a mother's grief!

Yet when the first wild throb is past
Of anguish and despair,
To lift the eye of faith to heaven,
And think "My child is *there*!"
Thus best can dry the gushing tears,
This yields the heart relief;
Until the Christian's pious hope
Overcomes a mother's grief!

THIRTY YEARS AGO.

Thirty years ago almost the entire kingdom and nearly every civilized nation in the world, were profoundly ignorant, if not blind, in relation to the nature and properties of intoxicating drinks. At that time all classes believed that these drinks were highly conducive to health and strength—that they were the gift of God to his intelligent creatures—the blessings of a bountiful Providence which ought to be received with grateful hearts, and hence, when the doctrine of total abstinence was first propounded, it was regarded as the most wild and Utopian idea ever submitted to the consideration of rational beings, and its teachers were looked upon either as fools or knaves, or a mixture of both. But now, to use a scripture form of expression, and to apply it to this subject, "the darkness is passed and the true light shineth." It may be true that some, who in

other respects are highly educated, still remain blind in relation to this question—our Secretary of State for the Home Department being a mournful illustration of this fact, yet we rejoice that millions of blind eyes have been opened, that the thick darkness which brooded over the nation for so many ages has been rolled back, and tens of thousands are singing—

"But now the spell is broke—abstain, be free!
No more shall this vile yoke enslave the free,
Come join with heart and hand our firm teetotal band,

On the rock take your stand—abstain, be free!
"Then shall your homes be blessed with peace and love,

That type of Heavenly rest, that world above;
And as ye onward press, through this great wilderness,
Heaven's guidance you possess—abstain be free!"

Thirty years ago it was a doubtful question whether a confirmed drunkard could be reclaimed. No Christian man possessing any proper conception of the boundless resources of the Supreme Being could doubt his power to arrest even a drunkard in his downward course, but such a manifestation of Divine power was an event of such rare occurrence, that the total and entire ruin of a confirmed drunkard was generally regarded as merely a question of time. But now we have an overwhelming array of facts that indisputably prove that the worst the most inveterate, and most degraded drunkard in existence can be reclaimed. It is true there are still some highly respectable gentlemen who entertain the notions of a bygone age on this subject, and if you happen in conversation to hint at the great work of reform which has been accomplished during the past thirty years, they shrug their shoulders and shake their heads, while they politely tell you that it's all a mistake—a mere picture of the imagination by which kind benevolent ladies and gentlemen continue to impose upon themselves a pleasing delusion.

When conversing with those antiquarian gentlemen, we have found it necessary to point out living men and women who have been reclaimed from habits of intemperance, and thus to convince them, by the evidence of their own senses, that Temperance reformers are not imposing upon themselves or the public any mere creation of philanthropic fancy. And, thank God! this is an easy task—that is to say, the number of reclaimed ones is so great, their moral and religious improvement is so decided,

while the comforts of their wives and children are so patent to all who know them, that the most sceptical must feel convinced that teetotalism possesses a power to grapple successfully with the vice of drunkenness in its most inveterate forms; and of those who are not convinced by such overwhelming evidence we are ready to conclude that, if the facts to which we have referred fail to remove their old fashioned prejudices, neither would they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.

Thirty years ago the trade of the licensed victualler and publican was considered to be not only respectable, but its introduction into a destitute neighbourhood quite an acquisition. It is true the law always regarded the business of making and selling strong drink as a dangerous one, and hence none but persons who are certified to possess a good moral character are permitted to engage in it.—Other branches of business may be followed by persons of any character, or of no character at all, but before a man is permitted to engage in this business he must produce a certificate of good moral character, signed by the clergy, or other respectable gentlemen; and various other restrictions and safeguards clearly indicate the dangerous character of the trade. But though always regarded as dangerous, thirty years ago it was held to be respectable and honourable. What a change has come over the spirit of this dream? Not only is the trade beginning to be looked upon as unnecessary, but as a positive source of evil, and lords and nobles, as well as other owners of public house property, are removing them as nuisances from their estates. We do not mean to say that there are no respectable persons in the trade. We are not speaking of the persons engaged in this business, but of the business itself, and none are more thoroughly convinced of its disreputable character than many who are engaged in it, and hence at every meeting of licensed victuallers various attempts are made to bolster up a sinking reputation which must go down, because it has no foundation upon which to rest. The brewer may pass his compliments to the trade, and solicitors to licensed victuallers' associations may display their oratory in praise of the traffic, but, in the words of one of themselves, publicans feel that their business is 'a villainous affair.' These facts seem to indicate that 'the beginning of the end' has become visible; we may, therefore, hope that the providence of God will so arrange the course of events that in due time 'might will be with the right,' and a business which is more de-