

### A Cold Blast from the North.

The Temperance movement has received attention in Britain from no less a personage than "Blackwood," alias "Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine." For his own reputation sake, he had better let us alone. The article is amusing, but mortifying; for surely there can be no real pleasure in seeing a learned old man making a fool of himself. Granting there may be some truth in the charges he prefers against Teetotalers,—but it is a sad proof of want of candour, to drag minor errors forward,—for the purpose of obscuring a great and good cause. Many readers of Blackwood know little enough of the Temperance movement, and now, if they look at it only through these spectacles, they will not know much more. But, however, this *cold blast*, as we call it, may incline some to enquire for themselves, and the "consumption decreed" may "overflow with righteousness."

We had just read the article in Blackwood, and were thinking of replying thereto, when our valued contemporary, the *Weekly News and Chronicle*, of April 9th, arrived by the British steamer. Without further remarks of our own, we transfer to our pages the admirable editorial relating thereto, and think it will suffice to show the egregious errors committed by the grave old Tory politician of world-wide fame. The Editor says:—

"Some time back that witty canon of St. Paul's, the late Sidney Smith, took it into his head that Methodism was a great nuisance, and that he would write it down. Accordingly, he collected a set of Evangelical magazines, picked out everything that seemed to him ludicrous, and by taking a passage from its context—there is nothing you cannot make ludicrous if you are so disposed—and published these passages with a running commentary of his own. Alas! in spite of the reverend gentleman's views, Methodism flourished, notwithstanding that he had shot at it the keen arrows of his wit. Blackwood has attempted similarly to put down the Temperance Movement, but with even less success than that which attended the reverend joker. All that we have is a poor copy of a poor original. Sidney Smith's *Malice*, without Sidney Smith's wit. Very appropriately All Fool's Day was the day chosen—a more fitting day could not have been selected for this formidable attack.

Blackwood is hard to please. According to him, "the foolish and the designing" hear that George Cruikshank, Silk Buckingham, Lawrence Heyworth, Joseph Sturge, are "the prominent agents," where not prominent, the really moving agents in the Temperance Movement. The publications connected with it contain often, "in subtle disguise, disaffection to the institutions of our country,—disloyalty and dissent." Teetotalers are steeped to the lips in the matters of bitterness; "their bigotry is disgusting and ridiculous." The writer is angry because their meetings are attended by whole cart-loads of reformed drunkards—because they begin at the beginning and get children to take pledge, thus acting in accordance with the teaching of a very old fashioned book, that you should train up a child in the way in which he should go—and because a movement, born of the people and appealing to the people, cannot use the miming phraseology and fashionable affectation of May Fair. Such are the sins for which the Temperance Movement has to answer. We grant them at once. Possibly a great number of teetotalers are Dissenters; probably some of them are foolish and designing; many of them are reformed drunkards, thank God for it! and many of them are acquainted with human nature can easily understand, are very prone to think teetotalism a cure for every ill; but we cannot agree with Blackwood that for this a great movement is to be abandoned. It is in evidence that a very large proportion of human misery, including poverty, disease, and crime, is induced by the use of alcoholic or fermented liquors as beverages. It is proved that the most perfect health is compatible with total abstinence from all such intoxicating beverage; it is clear that such abstinence would greatly contribute to the health, the prosperity, the morality, and the happiness of the human race; and it is also equally clear that, to an immense number who have become victims to strong drink, abstinence is the only chance of salvation. Nothing, we take it, is more self-evident than these truisms. In proof, we appeal to our police and assize

courts, to the testimony of policemen, to the confessions of our criminals, to the grave declarations of our judges. We look at our land, and we see no other crime so fearfully prevalent as this of drunkenness. For this we see our fellow-countrymen taxing themselves annually to the amount of sixty millions. Against this society has to arm itself with gaols, and policemen, and judges, and the costly apparatus of law. For this our churches are deserted, our schools languish, our mechanics' institutions die out, and our workhouses and hospitals are ever filled. In consequence of this the Temperance Movement exists. It is a specific remedy for a specific ill. It finds a deadly custom prevalent, and it recommends Abstinence. The people who do this may be very absurd people, their language may be very coarse and vulgar, they may be very narrow-minded and fanatic (all earnest men are open to this charge;) but at any rate, they are doing a mighty work, and deserve God speed.

How otherwise are you to combat drunkenness? As society is constituted, to achieve a certain end you must have a certain organisation. An evil exists; you must either let it alone or attack it. If you do the latter, the more directly you attack it the better. Instead of Abstinence, Blackwood recommends the Church Catechism. Gibbon tells us of one of the African bishops who, when he was remonstrated with by one of the churches in his diocese that he had appointed to their pulpit a man sadly too carnal for so spiritual an office, replied that that was all true, but that they had this consolation, that their priest was undeniably orthodox: they might have had a better liver, but they certainly could not have had one more correct in his theological views. Blackwood seems of a similar opinion. We question, however, whether the public at large will receive orthodox belief as a substitute for practice quite the reverse. The former is not always a preventive of the latter. As a people we are undeniably orthodox. Unfortunately, as a people, we are undeniably given to drinking. But Blackwood has another remedy besides the Church Catechism. He tells us "beer-houses and gin-palaces, as they now are, are moral pest-houses; they want severe regulation." Blackwood knows "not how to think decently of this our Government, while notorious haunts of thieves, prostitutes, murderers, are almost protected, and brutalities increase." By the way this last sentence sounds very much like that "disaffection to the institutions of our country," which Blackwood imputes as such a sin to the teetotalers; but let that pass. Beer-houses and gin-palaces, as they are, are moral pest-houses. The aim of the Teetotalers is to keep men out of these moral pest-houses. The question naturally suggests itself, Why are they moral pest-houses? The answer is because intoxicating liquors are consumed in them; because men sit in them till their brains become inflamed with the maddening draught; because men come out of them ripe and ready for the commission of any crime. The Teetotalers say, do away with drinking, and these moral pest-houses will cease to exist. Blackwood wants severe regulations on the part of Government. Which is the more sensible course—which is the better remedy—which is the more likely to reach the root of the matter; we leave our readers to settle for themselves.

Perhaps, after all, the best answer to Blackwood is Blackwood. It is well to appeal from Philip drunk to Philip sober. "Wine! wine! whose praises are clamorously sung around the festive board, and whose virtues supply the song with brilliant thoughts and ardent syllables, what need of eloquence and verse to sound thy fame, while murder and seduction bear ghostly witness to thy potency? Is there a greater crime than those? name it, and drunkenness shall claim it for a child." This extract we take from Blackwood, when Blackwood was remarkable for its brilliancy and power—when Blackwood was what we fear it can never be again.

In conclusion, we think Blackwood might have spoken more hopefully of the Temperance movement. We protest against any cause being judged by isolated extracts, by occasional absurdities of language or of action on the part of its supporters. The efforts of temperance advocates to save men's bodies and souls, are, at any rate, worthy of honour. Throughout the length and breadth of the land, there are thousands, who, but for it, would have been rotting away in our work-houses, or hospitals, or gaols. To continue this god-like work, to lead back the drunkard to blessedness and peace—is assuredly a noble aim. Men may think the teetotaler mistaken, but at any rate he deserves respect. He deserves even something more than negative praise. Their constant protest against a vice which has thinned the temples of