

self; but why should I prevent others from drinking, if they think it right to do so?"

"Ah!" said Mr. Thompson, "I am glad, Mr. Jackson, to hear you speak thus plainly. You wish to reform the world of intemperance, and at the same time to accommodate yourself to the tipping prejudices of the people. You do not think that the drinking customs are such a fruitful source of evil as to warrant you in standing entirely aloof from them. You may not drink yourself, but you have no objection to sit and see others drinking; or even, in order to show your courtesy, you will mix toddy for the ladies, and add it freely round. This, I must say, appears to me to be a very feeble principle. The elements that compose it utter weakness. It will never become such a principle of action as to urge men on to a successful struggle against the giant evil. A thousand may practise it, and yet it will never become powerful. If you multiply weak principles and weak principles a thousand times over, the product will be weakness of principle still."

"But," said the secretary, interrupting Mr. Thompson, with great warmth, "but, sir, come to the essence of my objection; what say you to the loss of liberty to which you subject others? Liberty, sir, liberty is a precious thing, the best flower that earth grows."

"I wish I only saw you in the full enjoyment of liberty," replied Mr. Thompson. "You are still willing to be the slave of tyrant custom. You have not courage to break asunder its fetters, and cast them from you. And yet it ill becomes one who is himself a slave to shout so loudly about liberty. But to your objection. I do not see how I deprive any man of his liberty, by not presenting to him intoxicating drinks. Truly, Mr. Jackson, I think you speak words without meaning. If there were no greater degradation of liberty than this, the jubilee song of pure and perfect freedom might be sung all the world over. Do I deprive the opium-eater of his liberty, because I do not keep him in my house, and help him to half an ounce when he asks for it, or the smoker, because I do not present to him a pipe, cigar? Or the card-player, because I do not keep for him a pack of cards? I do not believe that any of these things is productive of one tith of the evil that the drinking customs generate. No, no, Mr. Jackson; the cry of liberty, which you have raised against the long-pledgers, is of those old cuckoo cries which delude the simple; but, when men who think for themselves, appear to be mere sounds without sense."

"But, then, the courtesies of society, sir, the courtesies of society; remember these," ejaculated the worthy secretary in a tone of rising indignation.

"Do you mean to say, Mr. Jackson," asked Mr. Thompson, "do you mean to say that the courtesies of social life—for we assail no other courtesies but those that are deemed more valuable than the interests and desires, hopes and the happiness, present and future, of the six hundred thousand of our fellow-creatures, who through the influence of these courtesies, are wrecking and foundering for time and eternity in the devouring whirlpool of intemperance? Weigh them in the balance, and the courtesies you speak of will prove lighter than vanity and air. These courtesies, indeed! that are scathing the fairest flowers of earth; turning streams of pleasure into waters of gall; poisoning the very fountains of existence; sowing seeds of fell ruin and black woe in ten thousand happy hearts; and scattering firebrands, arrows, and death, in the path of mortal life, and amid every circle of human life. Surely, friend, courtesies like these are far more dangerous in the breach than in the observance."

"I confess," said Archie Gray, "that Mr. Thompson has to have the best of the argument. My judgment approves of the position he has taken, though my feelings go

against it. He is consistent, though extreme. The disease is desperate, and he prescribes a desperate remedy."

"Indeed, Mr. Jackson," said Mr. Thompson, addressing him, "I often wonder on what grounds you take a pledge at all, or what precise reasons you can assign for the principles you have espoused."

"Numerous and weighty, sir, are the reasons which conspired to make me an abstainer," said the confident secretary, assuming an attitude of oratorical defiance.

"Pray, what may some of them be?" enquired Mr. Thompson.

"Why," said Mr. Jackson, "I abstain, because I think intoxicating drinks are injurious to the human system; because he who takes them is in danger of becoming a drunkard; because the drunkard's only hope lies in abstinence; and because the drinking system is the cause of an immense amount of evil in the church and in the world. These are some of my reasons for abstaining; can you assign stronger for yours?"

"To me," said Mr. Thompson, "such reasons only prove the inconsistency of your conduct. Let us look them fairly in the face. You abstain, because intoxicating drinks are injurious to the system; i.e., you will not take them, least they injure your own system; and yet you reserve the right of giving them, to the injury of another. You abstain, because he who takes them is in danger of becoming a drunkard; i.e., you will not yourself run the risk of becoming a drunkard by taking them; at the same time you reserve the right of putting others in the way of risk, by giving them to them. You abstain, because the drunkard's only hope lies in abstinence; i.e., in a touch-not, taste-not, handle-not abstinence; not your *partial abstinence*, if I may use such a self-contradictory phrase; an abstinence from only part of the drinking customs, for drunkards will never be reformed if you allow them to sit in the drinking company, or take into their hands the cup that ruined them. You abstain, because the drinking system is the cause of much and grievous evil; and yet it is but a very small part of that system, that you pledged yourself to put down. By holding this one opinion, that you are warranted in giving drink to others, you grant that men are justified in making drink, in selling drink, in buying drink, in taking drink, and in holding drinking parties. The distiller, the brewer, the publican, can say as much, and go as far as you. Candidly speaking, sir, I do not see that you have got a single inch of ground to stand upon, in order to the maintenance of your principles."

"These arguments of Mr. Thompson proved too hard for the short-pledge secretary. He could not stand them, and therefore he waxed very wroth, and, giving his head a toss, with an air of affected dignity, he exclaimed, "It's in vain, sir, to condescend to argument with you extreme men. You will not listen to those who can reason. You have evidently never made Aristotle your study, for you jump to conclusions without any regard to your premises. I will not, therefore, waste my breath and time upon you." And having thus said, Mr. Jackson, with an abruptness quite in keeping with his nature and manner, bade Mr. Thompson and his two friends a half-muttered good bye, and walked out at the door.

Mary Gray warmly thanked Mr. Thompson for the noble defence which he had made of the principles that reformed her husband. Archie himself confessed that he was sorry that he promised to go to the dinner; but yet would not agree to cancel his engagement. Mr. Thompson affectionately counselled him, and then took farewell.

That night was a sleepless one to Mrs. Gray. She dreaded the day that was coming; and when morning dawned, and the sun rose in unclouded splendour, it seemed to her to be shrouded in a pall of gloom. She thought she beheld the storms of adversity gathering above her head. She wept, and on her knees implored her husband not to go to the public dinner. "Archie," she said, "for your own sake