



## Total Abstinence the Dictate of Common Sense.

(The Sunday School Times.)

Apart from the much discussed question of the duty of total abstinence from intoxicating drinks, there is this less frequently considered but important question: 'If one has the privilege of choice, is it best to be a total abstainer, or to pursue another course?' On that question the editor has positive views, and he is glad to express them.

Some years ago, the editor, then a Philadelphian, was at a luncheon given in the Rittenhouse Club by Dr. William Pepper, Provost of the University of Pennsylvania, after the exercises of Commencement Day. As Provost Pepper was moving from one small table to another where his guests of the day were seated, he sat by the editor's side for a while, and he said familiarly, among other things:

'I notice that you do not drink any wine to-day. Do you never drink wine?'

'No, I never do,' was the reply.

'Do you refrain from preference, or from conscientious motives?'

'Partly from both causes. I need to be always in good physical condition, in order to enable me to do my best work at all times. To secure this, I refrain from everything in the line of narcotics or brain stimulants. I avoid all that which would deaden my nerves or excite my brain, and which might lead me to think for a time that I am not as weak or as tired as I am. I want to know what is my true possession of capital. I am careful not to borrow to-morrow's income for to-day's expenditure. I want to go to bed at night with no brain balance overdrawn.'

Dr. Pepper, who was eminent as a physician, as well as an exceptionally hard worker with his brain and nerves, said heartily, as he brought down his hand on the editor's knee:

'I must say that that is sound reasoning, from a physician's point of view.'

Thus, as a matter of personal preference, within the sphere of Christian liberty, and in accordance with the best judgment of eminent medical authority, not swayed by extreme total abstinence practice or preference, the editor is, and for more than three-score years has been, a rigid total-abstainer, and this course he recommends to others.

Not only in view of his personal preference and best judgment, but as a matter in which example may be influential beyond our thought, he has deemed total abstinence the only safe course. An instance illustrating this that occurred thirty years ago impressed itself forcibly on his mind.

Being in San Francisco in 1872 he heard much said about the California wines, and he was repeatedly urged to try them. An old friend, whose guest he was, was particularly desirous that he should test their superiority, mentioning a favorite brand in particular, as he was aware of the fact that in younger days the editor was an apothecary, and had some knowledge of the differences in wines. A few days after their conversation on this matter, they were together invited to a dinner at a neighbor's. Then came a new trial.

Two valued servants, who had for years lived in the editor's family in Hartford, were now in the family where he had been invited to dinner. At the dinner were several kinds of wine, but as they were proffered to him he declined. The hostess for the evening urged that he should try their choicest California wines, naming especially the favorite brand of his old friend. The bottle was already open, and the others were drinking from it. Why should he not try it, he was asked, enough to ex-

press his opinion on it? But he declined. His hostess urged him to yield, until he thought she was pressing the matter unduly, and he was therefore the firmer, and the dinner was ended.

The next day he met the elder of the two servants, whom he respected and valued for her worth. To his surprise she said, as to the dinner of the evening before:

'When we were preparing for the dinner, my mistress was considering what wines we were to have. I said, "Mr. Trumbull never drinks wine." She said, "He'll drink wine at our dinner to-night,—you see if he doesn't." I said, "If Mr. Trumbull tastes your wine, you can take off a month's wages of mine." I just knew you wouldn't touch wine.'

And the editor thanked the Lord that he had not lost his good name with her as a total-abstainer who could be depended on. He then realized anew that we are always in the balance before our fellows, always being watched to see what we do; and that for our own sakes, and for the sake of others, total abstinence is our only safe rule.

The writer has had varied experiences in life, as enabling him to test and confirm the reasonableness of his views in favor of total abstinence. He has travelled in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America. He has, in the last fifty years, been in the principal wine-growing countries of the world. He has lived on ocean and sea and river, on desert and prairie and mountain; he has been compelled to drink the vilest water imaginable,—but he has never been where he thought that the best wine or other alcoholic beverage was so safe or so desirable, in view of what he saw, as the poorest water available to him. This is so far as his personal experience taught him.

As to the experience of others whom he knew or observed, the evidence is in the same direction as his own. As to the peril in departing from total abstinence, he can say that in a large majority of cases his personal friends, both boys and girls, who were not contented to remain total abstainers, either died drunkards or are living as such. He has seen no fewer drunkards in wine-growing countries than in the vicinity of breweries and distilleries. He has found that no strength of will, nor earnestness of religious profession or practice, would surely enable a person to pursue a course of safe moderation if he or she departed from total abstinence. He has seen so many men of exceptional strength of will and character yield to intemperance; he has seen so many clergymen of different denominations, and so many lovely women, follow in a similar course, that he is afraid to depart from the safe and desirable course of total abstinence.

He thanks God that he has the privilege of being a total abstainer, and he knows that that course is the only safe one for him. He believes that that course is the only safe or wise course for any one, and therefore he recommends it to all.

## A Slight Mistake

(The Temperance Record.)

Everyone considered Nellie Foster a lucky girl, and when her brother Tom and cousin Frank arrived from the front three days before her wedding no one was surprised. Things always happened just as Nellie planned, she seemed to live upon the sunny side of life. Certainly the marriage would not have been half as gay without the boys. From the moment the two tall figures in khaki appeared at the church door they divided attention with the pretty bride herself. The village children cheered and bobbed excitedly, and all the relations who had gathered from far and near to witness Nellie's surrender of her maiden liberty gave eager welcome to Tom and Frank. It was odd to see how shy and shame-faced the two men looked in spite of the distinguished service medals they had won.

'It's like a dream,' thought Tom, as he stood near the altar and heard the old vicar read the service in quivering tones. But if it did not seem quite real after the hard experiences of the last few years, it was, at any rate, a very pleasant change. The country had never seemed as sweet be-

fore; it was delightful to hear familiar sounds coming in through the windows from the farmhouse near, and to smell the hay again. It would not be half bad to settle down now that one had seen a bit of life. As Tom reached this point in his meditations, he let his eyes wander to where an old friend of his stood demurely behind the bride, holding her bouquet, whilst the ring was put on to seal the covenant. The pretty picture was so suggestive that Tom only awakened with a start to find the service over, and after that he had little time for day-dreams. Forgetting his shyness, he was soon the life of the merry party that gathered on the lawn at the 'Chestnuts' where his father had lived for the last thirty years. Everyone was sorry when the happy afternoon came to an end.

'Now, Tom, my boy,' called his father, after the bride and bridegroom had said good-bye, and many of the guests were preparing to follow their example, 'Now, Tom, you are looking pale. I can see it through your tan. Take a glass of wine to keep you up.'

The old man brought it to him as he spoke, and held it out.

Tom answered cheerfully enough.

'Not me, father, thank you. I haven't touched it since I've been away, in spite of fever. I don't mean to begin now.'

'Try me, instead, uncle,' said Frank coming up at that moment and taking the rejected glass. 'He's an out-and-outer—worse than when he went away. You remember how he used to lecture us, Miss Fletcher, don't you?'—turning to Nellie's bridesmaid as he spoke.

Tom glanced up quickly. He had not known she was there, but his eyes dropped again when he saw the scornful expression on her face.

'Humph,' he said to himself as he strolled away. 'If that is what she thinks of me I had better keep at a distance.'

From that moment the brightness of the summer day and the glad sweet joy of home-coming were lost to Tom, but, fortunately, his happiness came back with a rush when he and Frank were lounging in the porch that night after all the rest of the household had gone upstairs.

'Mary Fletcher looked jolly fine to-day, didn't she?' said Frank, as he smoked his last cigar.

'Yes,' assented Tom, trying hard to keep his voice from sounding sulky.

'Know what she said when you went off in a huff because I chaffed you about the wine?'

'No,' replied Tom. 'She looked scornful enough for anything.'

'I don't know how she looked,' continued Frank. 'I didn't notice, but she said you deserved another medal for your pluck and principle. Meant it, too, old chap, for when I declared you carried things too far, she gave me a temperance lecture on the spot. It seems she's run a Band of Hope here since we left and it's called Tom Foster's Band. There, that's me all over—let out the secret. They are going to give you a grand surprise to-morrow—you need not let them know I put you up to it. You would never have been able to face that girl again if you had changed your colors whilst we were away. I asked her if she had not been almost afraid to risk it and she said you always kept your word whatever I might do. Her scorn was all for me I can assure you.'

Tom, for once, believed his cousin Frank and went off to bed that night with a light heart, even daring to dream of another wedding day.

The J. C. Ayer Company, of Lowell, Mass., manufacturers of proprietary medicines, have issued the following notice to their employees: 'Believing that the smoking of cigarettes is injurious to both mind and body, thereby unfitting young men for their best work, therefore, after this date, we will not employ any young man under twenty-one years of age who smokes cigarettes.' This company are following the good lead of many other large employers of labor, whose attitude is a strong comment on the evils of this habit, and cannot but do much good.