



The Primary Catechism on Beer.

LESSON XII.

THE PLEASURES OF BEER-DRINKING.

(By Julia Colman, National Temperance Society, New York.)

- Q.—Is beer pleasant to the taste?
 A.—To the beginner it is usually nauseous and bitter.
- Q.—Why do people continue to drink it if they dislike it?
 A.—They are led on by the example of old toppers and by the idea that it is not polite to refuse it when offered.
- Q.—What can be done to avoid this social beer-drinking?
 A.—Always kindly but firmly refuse the beer when offered. Let all your friends and acquaintances know that you never take it.
- Q.—Where else are boys and girls liable to be tempted?
 A.—At those groceries where bottled ale and other liquors are kept.
- Q.—What other danger is there in dealing with grocers who keep such liquors?
 A.—Liquors may be sent to the house charged under the name of other family supplies.
- Q.—How does beer drinking affect the disposition?
 A.—It makes the drinker morose and sour.
- Q.—What striking proof have we of the misery in beer?
 A.—About two-thirds of the suicides in this country are those of beer drunkards.
- Q.—What, then, must we think of the pleasures of beer-drinking?
 A.—That as it brings ill-health, quarrels, moroseness, and suicide, its pleasures do not equal its sorrows.

Walter's Slip.

'So you are going away, I hear, Walter?' It was Mr. Blank, the secretary of the Band of Hope to which Walter belonged, who said this. Walter looked up with a pleased smile.

'Yes, sir,' he replied proudly, 'I am going on Saturday.'

'Well, I hope you will have a nice comfortable place. You are to be apprenticed, I understand?'

'Yes, sir,' answered Walter again.

'And will you live with your employer?'

'Yes, sir; there are two other apprentices and one assistant living indoors, so I shan't be dull.'

'No; I trust they may prove pleasant, congenial companions. Is your employer an abstainer?'

'I don't know, sir,' and Walter colored. To tell the truth he thought it unlikely, since he carried on the business of wine and spirit merchant as well as that of grocer; but Walter did not think it necessary to mention this.

'Don't forget to take your teetotal principles with you, my boy,' said Mr. Blank. 'I hope you will find yourself in a teetotal home, but whether this be so or not, do not allow yourself to be laughed into dishonoring your colors.'

'No fear, sir!' returned Walter confidently. 'Why, I never tasted a drop of strong drink in my life, and I never mean to.'

'That is right; but you may meet with temptations in the future to which you have never yet been exposed. Don't trust too much to your own strength, Walter; remember what the apostle says, "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." Good-bye, my boy, and God bless you.'

He gave Walter a hearty grip of the

hand and passed on, leaving him a little uncomfortable.

'He's always so tremendously serious,' Walter muttered to himself discontentedly. 'Just as if there was any fear of my breaking the pledge!' And he curled his lips at the bare idea. 'Why, I wouldn't be seen going into a public-house for anything! Didn't I offend grandfather and lose a sixpence into the bargain because I wouldn't fetch his supper beer? If I have to sell the stuff, I'll take good care I don't drink it.'

But before Walter had been many days in his situation he discovered that to be a teetotaler here was very different to being a teetotaler at home. His employer was not an abstainer, nor was any member of his family or household. The assistant and the two other apprentices took their glass of ale each at supper, and laughed at Walter for not doing the same.

Now Walter, although an abstainer, could scarcely be called a water-drinker. He was an only child, and had been somewhat indulged; there had always been a cup of nice hot cocoa or bovril with his supper at home, or when the weather was too hot to make these drinks acceptable a glass of milk or home-made lemonade. But here there was nothing but water for those who chose to refuse the ale. This was not the heaviest part of his trial, either; it was the laughter of his companions that Walter minded the most. He had never been accustomed to be sneered at for his teetotalism, but now he seemed to be a butt of ridicule for the whole household, and seldom sat down to a meal without something being said that sent the angry blood to his cheeks.

But although he sometimes gave way to temper, and said bitter and unwise things, he resisted the temptation to be untrue to his pledge.

'I won't let them laugh and tease me into taking the drink,' he would say to himself, perhaps by way of keeping up his courage. 'I can't see why they shouldn't let a fellow alone; but I'll show them that I have grit enough to hold my own.'

And then Mr. Blank's words would come back to him: 'If you want to steer your barque safely, you must have Christ on board,' and Walter would put up a brief, earnest prayer for help.

It used to seem such an easy thing to be an abstainer, and in his heart Walter despised those who broke the pledge. But this was altered now, and every night as he knelt to offer his evening prayer he would thank God that he had been kept faithful to his pledge through another day.

The selling of intoxicants grew more distasteful, too, and Walter made up his mind when his apprenticeship should be ended never to take a situation with any grocer who had a wine or spirit license. He was getting on very well in the business; his employer liked him for his cheerful, willing manner, and so did the assistant, while he was also a favorite with the other apprentices, in spite of their teasing. They valued him less for his business abilities than for his skill at football and cricket, but especially the latter. They pressed him to join their club, and were proud of the brilliancy of his playing and the notice it attracted. One day a match was played between this club and a neighboring one—a club that had gained some celebrity, having won nearly all the local matches of the season. There was naturally a good deal of excitement among the youthful cricketers, and Walter was as excited as any of them, and as anxious that his side should win. The match was arranged for their early closing day, and a wagonette was hired to convey them to the cricket ground, a meadow about five or six miles distant. Even in this short distance two stoppages were made for refreshment.

'You'd better take a glass of something to steady your nerves, old man,' said Herbert Waite, one of the other apprentices, to Walter, 'for you know we are depending on you to win this match for us.'

The others chimed in, some recommending one kind of drink and some another; but Walter resolutely shook his head, and could be prevailed upon to take nothing but lemonade.

The match was an exciting one, and for some time the issue seemed doubtful; it was Walter's skilful batting that eventually won the victory for his side, as everyone agreed. He was congratulated and flattered on all hands, and felt himself the hero of the hour.

On the way home they again stopped at a wayside inn to refresh themselves and to drink Walter's health.

'Surely you won't refuse to have a drop

on such an occasion as this, Walt!' said Herbert. 'It looks so unsociable not to.'

Walter never knew how he came to yield; he had been tempted more sorely times out of number and resisted; but now, almost before he was aware of what he was doing, he had taken the glass from Herbert and sipped its contents. The act was greeted with a burst of applause.

'Well done, old man!'

'I knew a fellow that can bat like he can couldn't be a milk sop.'

'Three cheers for Walter's emancipation!' And so on.

Walter felt little enough like a hero now. He had been false to his colors, and no amount of flattery could make up for his loss of self-respect. And this would have been such a splendid opportunity to have shown his 'grit.' True, he had taken but the merest sip, for the flavor was distasteful to him, yet by that sip he had dishonored his pledge and gone over to the other side.

No one guessed what was passing in his mind; his face was still flushed with excitement, while his tongue was the merriest, and his laugh the loudest of all. His companions would have been astonished could they have seen what a heavy heart lay under this seeming hilarity. Walter slept little that night. Mr. Blank's words kept ringing in his ears: 'It is often when we feel the most secure that we are in the greatest danger;' and again, 'Take Christ as your captain, then there will be no fear of shipwreck.'

Still the deed was done now; he had broken the pledge, and his companions knew it. Nothing remained but to go on and do as the rest did.

This way of reasoning was contrary to all Sunday-school and Band of Hope teaching, and Walter knew it. He was aware that the right thing would be to acknowledge his error, and to start afresh, not in his own strength, but with God as his helper. But how he would be laughed at! He fancied he could see the derisive smiles and hear the mocking words, and he told himself that he couldn't do it. But in spite of his slip, Walter was a boy of grit, and when morning came he had made up his mind to adopt the course he knew to be right. He said nothing about it till dinner-time, when one of his companions remarked jocosely—

'I suppose you'll give up "Adam's ale" now, Walter, and try our beverage?'

Walter shook his head. 'No, I shan't. I don't know what possessed me yesterday; I think I must have been off my head when I drank that beer. But I don't mean to have any more.'

A burst of laughter greeted this speech, but Herbert Waite did not join in it, and later on, when he and Walter were alone, he remarked approvingly—

'I say, old fellow, I think you behaved like a brick at dinner time. I could hardly believe my eyes yesterday when I saw you have that beer, and although I had been worrying you to drink, I didn't think any the better of you for it. But the way you spoke up to-day was real plucky, and I've half a mind to sign the teetotal pledge myself.'

'Do!' said Walter, eagerly. 'Let's sign together, Bert. I shall have to sign again, you know.'

Herbert needed a good deal of persuasion, but eventually agreed, and that very evening they sought out a well-known temperance advocate and put their names in his book.

You must not suppose that Walter found it easy sailing even yet; it was a long time before he was allowed to forget his slip, and the taunts were often hard to bear. But he had Herbert on his side now, and humbly endeavored to follow the advice of his Sunday-school teacher.—L. Slade, in 'Temperance Record.'

'Runaway.'

The following appeared many years ago as an advertisement in a Newfoundland Journal:—

'ONE HUNDRED POUNDS REWARD!!!'

'Ran away from the subscriber, within a few years, his whole estate, consisting of houses, lands, and above all, a good name. They gradually absented themselves, after being decoyed by a sad fellow who frequented this city, named Intemperance. Any person who will restore the aforesaid property, and cause legal proceedings to be had against the offender, shall receive the above reward, and the thanks of

'A TIPLER.'