

voice of science has laid it down unconditionally that all the young, and all who are in perfect health, do not need them, and are better without them. Many of the highest scientific authorities tell us further that even their moderate use is the cause of many painful disorders and thousands of premature deaths. In the middle classes, the use of two wines—claret and sherry—is nearly universal; and even in the last few days the rival vendors of these wines have been telling the world that each of these wines consists of strange concoctions which are the cause of gout and all sorts of gastric disorders. Further, we know, by the universal experience of the world, that wherever drinking is nationally common, drunkenness becomes nationally ruinous. And for this reason, alcohol is one of a number of lethal drugs which have the fatal property of creating for themselves a crave which in multitudes becomes an appetite; an appetite which strengthens into a vice, a vice which ends in disease; a disease which constitutes a crushing and degrading slavery. To myriads of human beings it creates a needless, an artificial, a physical temptation, which first draws, then drags, then drives as with a scourge of fire.

"In their helpless misery blind,  
A deeper prison and a heavier chain they find,  
And stronger tyrants."

Aristotle said of human nature, generally, that "We are prone rather to excess than to moderation;" but this natural propensity, this fatal bias, this original sin, is infinitely strengthened when it works, not only as a moral impulse, but as a physical law. No drunkard, since time began, ever meant to be a drunkard. To be a drunkard means nothing less than awful shipwreck of life and body; the curse of life; the agony of conscience; the obliteration of nobleness and hope. Why, then, are there 600,000 drunkards in England? Why is it that through drink we have seen "the stars of heaven fall and the cedars of Lebanon laid low?" The flood was scarcely dried before Noah, discovering drink, introduced into his own family, and among mankind, a curse and an infamy:

"Which since hath overwhelmed and drowned  
Far greater numbers on dry ground  
Of wretched mankind, one by one,  
Than e'er before the flood had done."

They who will make a young tiger their plaything must not be surprised if there be some to whom it will show, at last, a wild trick of its ancestors. In every nation where there is free temptation to drink there will be many drunkards, and for this reason, that drink induces a taste which is neither hunger, nor thirst, nor pleasure, nor reasonable want, but a morbid impulse, an indefinable desire, and

"Like the insane root,  
It takes the reason prisoner."

3. Then, next, what does the prevalence of drunkenness involve? It means that to thousands life becomes a long disease. Solomon told us that truth 3,000 years ago. "Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder." Delirium tremens—that inconceivably awful and agonising illness—is but one of God's executioners upon excess. The fact that a nation is addicted to drink and drunkenness means that the health of myriads will be ruined; it means that myriads of children, with diseased bodies, fatuous minds, and depraved impulses, will be, in the awful language of an old preacher, "not born into the world, but damned into the world," as idiots, or cripples, or predestined drunkards; a curse to nations, a curse to their neighbors and to themselves, a curse to the very ideal of humanity which they drag down and degrade, poisoning its very life-blood, and barring its progress to the goal of better days. Oh! nations may enjoy their revelries, but the river of enjoyment flows into a sea of misery, and disease is only indulgence taken at a later stage.

4. Nor is it only the bodies of men that suffer; it is their souls. Powerless for his deliverance, the conscience of the drunkard is not powerless for his torture. Robert Burns, Charles Lamb, and Hartley Coleridge have uttered the cry of men who have thus been swept over the cataract. The Spartans, when they wished to turn their children from the shame of intemperance, showed them the physical degradation of drunken Helots; but the physical results are nothing to the moral devastation, the abject servitude, the spiritual catastrophe of the man who has given himself over to the bondage of drink. When he recovers from the degradation of the animal, it is to feel the anguish of a lost soul. That is the reason why, year by year, drink not only crowds the workhouse with paupers, and the gaol with felons, and the asylum with lunatics, and the hospital with disease, but also swells more than any other cause—swells week by week and year by year—the list of those who, through the awful gate of suicide, rush, with rude insult, into the presence of their God. "The measure of alcohol consumed in a district," said Baron Dowse, "is the measure of the degradation." Whenever the drink tide rises highest, there, too, is the high-water mark of suicide, mortality, and crime. Wherewithal a man or a nation sinneth, by the same shall he be punished.

5. Nor is this all. The curse does not stay with him who caused it. It spreads in concentric circles of ruin. The drunkard almost invariably drags down his wife and family into the lurid whirlpool of his own retribution. Go to some public-house on Saturday night, between ten and twelve, when

the miserable working man is pouring into the till of the publican and the purse of the gin distiller, the money which should clothe and feed his wife and little ones; see, when the gin palaces in our most pauperised districts are cleared at night, a scene which, for vileness cannot be paralleled in any region of the world. Then follow the drunken man or drunken woman into the lair which they call their home. Home? it is a Dantean hell of brutality and squalor, of which the very air reeks with abomination! "In former times the wife was usually the victim of her husband's brutishness, now she becomes in innumerable cases the partner in his sin. In either case, be she victim or associate, no creature on earth so demands our pity." While threats and blows resound in that curse-laden air, the children—the ragged, miserable, half-starved, degraded children—the children who will grow up hereafter to recruit the ranks of the felon and the harlot, huddle together in mute terror. "They do not cry; such children seldom do shed tears. Nature could never furnish a foundation to meet such demands." Often they make their escape into cellar or chimney, or hide themselves under the rotting heap of rags or straw, and do not venture to creep out, half-suffocated, till the drink-maddened fiend whom they call "father" is away, or till he has slept off for a time the vitriol madness. And in most of our large towns there are whole streets, and alleys, and districts of such drunkards' homes—infamous streets which hide hundreds of blighted families, the disgrace of our civilization and the disgrace of our Christianity; the only things which flourish there are the public-houses, which, confronting the minimum of virtue with the maximum of temptation, drain from the wretched neighborhood its last life, and, like the fungus on the decaying tree, feed on the ruin which is their boon. We have heard much in these few days of "Horrible London," and of the bitter cry of its abject. What makes these slums so horrible? I answer, with the certainty and the confidence of one who knows, Drink! And what is the remedy? I tell you that every remedy you attempt will be a miserable failure; I tell the nation, with the conviction founded on experience, that there will be no remedy till you save these outcasts from the temptations of drink. Leave the drink, and you might build palaces for them in vain. Leave the drink, and before a year was over your palaces would still reek with dirt and squalor, with infamy and crime. Of the trade in general which ministers to this temptation I will say nothing; but at least in such vile streets as these, whence, day and night, this bitter cry of abject cities rings in the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth, I should have thought that any man who believes in God, that any man who calls himself a Christian, would have been, not ashamed only, but afraid to swell those geysers of curse and ruin. In such districts, at any rate, I know not how they can be blind to the evils which spring from what they sell, or how they can fail to hear the stern words ringing in their ears—

"Fye, sirrah,  
The evil that thou causeth to be done,  
That is thy means to live."

They who will not see this must be left to their own conscience, in that hour when she speaks, and we can be deaf no longer to her voice; but I ask every man concerned in such evils, which is best?—which will they think best when, a few years hence, they face the hour of death and the day of judgment, to forego such tainted gains, or to go on contributing—to the wholesale manufacture of infamy that knows no innocence; of youth without modesty or shame; of maturity that is mature in nothing but guilt and suffering; of blasted old age which is a scandal on the name we bear?

6. But the tempted, the victims of drink—I ask you, do these men, these women, do these children, do these wretched districts, or do they not deserve our pity, and demand our efforts at reform? Is it, or is it not—surely the question is plain and pressing—our duty to content ourselves with clever epigrams and plausible sophisms, and to be infinitely tender to vested interests in the causes of human ruin, or with stern effort and inflexible perseverance, to reduce an evil so colossal, to redeem men, our brothers, from a misery so deep as this?

7. Yet even now I have not come to the worst, or anything like the worst. For the abuse of drink, besides being, by unanimous testimony, a main cause of pauperism, disease, and madness, is also, by irresistible evidence, the main cause of crime—the all but conclusive cause of crimes of violence. I might quote the emphatic, the oft-repeated, the uncompromising testimony of almost every judge upon the bench. They have done their best to interpose between us and our degradation the purity of their ermine. They have said, for instance, that Saturday "pay-day" means "drink-day and crime-day," and that many a man "enters the door of a public-house respectable and respected, and leaves it a felon." On one occasion several instances at Liverpool came before Mr. Justice Mellor, of a savagery so loathsome, of a callosity so bestial, of a dehumanization so unutterable, that he spoke of drink—which, in this country, is the sole cause of such abnormal wickedness—in terms which might, one would have thought, arouse any country, however sunken. But I will confine myself to the remarks made by one judge in one cathedral city—by Mr. Justice Hawkins—at the last Midsummer Assizes in Durham. They may be well known to you. Yet I will repeat them. It may be that the words, spoken so solemnly from the bench of justice, may derive yet further emphasis when they are solemnly repeated in the House of God. "When I come," he said, "to look through the calendar, and when I see the number of cases which have been committed under the influence of drink, I cannot