

## LETTERS TO LITTLE FOLKS.

(From *Scottish Temperance Review*.)

*My Dear Young Friends*,—In my former letters, I have been telling you that I wish you to be teetotalers, and trying to get you to be so. But I want you to be not only teetotalers, but members of a teetotal society. There are good reasons for my wishing this, and I am just going to tell you them; but before I do so, let me say a word or two, about what a teetotal society is. Well, it is just a number of persons who join together, declaring that they will be teetotalers, and do all they can to get others to become so too. When, then, a person joins the society, he says, by his doing so, that he will be a teetotaler himself, and try to make others teetotalers also. But, generally, every member signs, or puts his name to what is called a *pledge*. People have said a great deal of evil about the pledge; that it was this thing and the next, but always a very bad thing. Yet, after all they have said, they have not been able to make it worse than it really is, just a *promise* to keep by teetotalism, and if teetotalism be right, then it cannot be wrong to promise to keep by it. If you sign the pledge of any society, you become a member of it; and, as I said, there are good reasons for wishing you to be connected with a society. The *first* is, *because it will be better for yourselves*. For instance, you will find teetotalism much easier the one way than the other. When you join a society, it is soon known, and you are saved a good deal of trouble telling you are teetotalers, as you would often have to do if you had just become so, without joining a society. Your little companions soon spread it, and it goes thick and fast. Here are two of your young friends, John and Tom. John is a pledged teetotaler, and it is known that he has joined the society. Tom is not pledged; he wishes to practise teetotalism, without signing or joining. They are both in the same party, and the wine or cordial goes round. It comes to one and he takes it, and to another, and he follows his example; and then it reaches John, but he gives a nod, as much as to say, 'I'm a teetotaler; and it is passed on. At last it comes to Tom. He says, 'I don't take any.' 'Oh! you are not a teetotaler; you may take.' Tom's face gets quite flushed, and he stammers out, 'I am a teetotaler.' 'When did you join?' 'I have not joined any society, but I am going to keep from drink without joining.' 'O, if you haven't joined, then you may take. If you were pledged like John, we wouldn't ask you to break your pledge.' And so they go urging. Tom refuses, but gets more uncomfortable the longer he is urged, or spoken about, till he would almost break his resolution, rather than endure it any longer. At all events, he finds it very hard, compared with John, to be a teetotaler. Now, I think it wrong in any one to ask, or press a person to take drink, when he doesn't wish to do it, though he be not a pledged teetotaler; but I am telling you what I have often seen. Your friend Oliver has often got off with no trouble, just by his being a member of a society, when others, who wished to be teetotalers without pledging themselves, or joining a society, were very uncomfortable. But, besides what I have noticed, a joined teetotaler has the advantage of the countenance and advice of all his fellow-members. Without a society, you could not have any of those nice meetings, and speeches, and excursions, that young teetotalers have; and so you would want all that these things do to make you love teetotalism more and more, and bind you more closely to it.

You have all heard the proverb, 'Union is strength;' and it is a true one. If a person is alone in any thing, he has only, as it were, his own strength for that thing; but if he is joined with others, he gets the benefit of theirs. Let me give an old illustration of this. Look into this bed-room—there is an old man dying. He has a large family, they have many enemies, and he knows that their enemies will do what they can to hurt them; but he feels that so long as

his family keep together, they will be safe. He has called them to his bedside, to give them his dying advice, to live together, and love each other. He bids them bring to him a number of rods which he has bound together. There are just as many rods as there are members of his family. He gives the bundle to the oldest, and bids him to try to break it. He tries, with all his might, but fails. He gives it to the second, and to the third, and so on, till all have tried, but they cannot break it. He then unties the bundle, gives a rod to each, and bids them try now. At once, each snaps his rod in two, with ease. From this, he takes occasion to tell them, that so long as they are all together, their enemies will not be able to harm them, any more than they were able to break the bundle; but if they separate, they will be sure to be overcome. Now, I hope you see the lesson this teaches, about joining a teetotal society. What I wish you to learn by it is, that you are far more likely to keep to teetotalism, if you are members of a society, than if you are not. If any person wishes to turn you from it, they will not find it so easily done as if you were alone.

But again, I hope you will all have better motives for keeping to teetotalism, than a fear of others; but that may have a good effect, and it will not have nearly so much influence on you, if you are not members of a society. By your joining a society, your teetotalism, as I said, becomes more widely known, and you feeling this, are more careful to keep true to your pledge. The public know that you have joined, and they will be ready to notice if you act as teetotalers ought to do. Besides, by being members of a society, all your fellow-members become as it were your keepers, and have a watchful eye over you. Perhaps you wouldn't like this. If you be right teetotalers, it will give you no trouble; and it has often been useful, not only in teetotalism, but in many other things, and not only to young persons, but to those who are grown up.

But I must tell you another reason why I wish you to join a teetotal society, rather than be merely teetotalers; and that is *because it will be better for others*. Now there are several ways in which this will happen: one is, that when there is a society, many more are made to *think* about the subject. You will see how joining together in a public society would do this, more than if persons were only private teetotalers; and it is a great matter to get people to *think* about a thing. When they do, they often see that it is quite different from what they had been led to believe it was. This has often been the case with teetotalism. Many a one has become a teetotaler, just from being led to think about it, by there being a society in the place. Besides, according to the number and character of the persons who join a society, so does the cause become respected, and the mouths of its enemies are shut, and it prospers.

I must not let you forget, my dear young friends, that in other ways you can do much more good when in a society than when alone. Each member of a society has, as it were, not only the influence that belongs to himself, but the influence of all the rest joined with it. Union is strength, as much in going forward as in standing our ground. When others are seeking the same end with us, it encourages us to be more active. And there is the advantage of the skill and wisdom of others in forming plans, and their help in carrying them out. You are all friends of missions I hope, and members of a missionary society. If you are, you will know, without my saying much more about it, how you can do more good in a society than you could alone. For example, when would what one child could do, have built the 'John Williams' missionary ship? Yet this was done by children uniting together. Much good has been already done by the children having bought that ship; and no one can tell how great the good shall be that shall flow from it. Now, this is just an illustration of what good may be done by joining with others, which you could never do alone; and it shows,