

TEMPERANCE COLUMN.

THE DEAN OF CANTERBURY ON TOTAL ABSTINENCE.

A large united meeting of Parochial Societies of Dover and neighbourhood, was held in the New Town Hall, Dover, on Monday, Jan. 23rd, at which the Dean of Canterbury presided. It was many years ago since he first attended a temperance meeting in Dover, and he was at that time a moderate drinker. He had since come round to the right and true stand, which was that of total abstinence. When he took the pledge many persons prophesied that he would fail in health, but he was glad to say that had not been the case, and he had now abstained for many years, and he had entered his 70th year, and was still healthy and capable of doing his various duties. Although he missed the liquor at first his health had never suffered, to any extent, from not taking fermented liquors. He regarded the question of temperance as one of the most social questions of the present day, and they should rejoice that they were living in a time when when those things were taken in their true light. There was no kind of misery or sorrow but that an attempt was not made to remedy it as far as possible. There was a very great and decided improvement in all sanitary matters in the present day, and they could not look round now without seeing that the poor were better housed, and better fed and clothed, and great efforts were made to alleviate them as far as possible, and no one could complain that he was neglected by the community. The more that had been done to remove these evils the more clearly it was shown that drunkenness was one of the most terrible evils that existed, and it was also the cause of many other evils. It wasted a very considerable amount of the earnings of the poorer classes, on that which really does them no good. (Applause.) He found in this way a larger proportion of their earnings were spent than in those who were in more comfortable circumstances. He was certain that the condition of those classes would be better if so large an amount were not spent on that which wasted their strength, and it is a very serious impediment in their way of having happy homes. They would have more money to spend in food, clothing, and in the education of their children if they did not spend so much in that which really does not benefit them. There was no greater obstacle in the way of the labouring classes becoming a God-fearing people than the habits of intemperance. He thought that they could say that the evil was not increasing, and the amount of money spent in the drink traffic had not increased or diminished, and there was a certain gain in that case, as the population was steadily increasing. He said that when any person broke away from their drinking

habits and tried to reform, there was a great amount of sympathy shown to that man by those amongst whom he worked, and that was not seen a few years ago, and he considered this was one of the most important gains that had been the result of the great temperance agitation. There was another point, namely, that of public opinion. Many years ago drunkenness was not looked upon as an evil, but as a weakness, and a matter of necessity, but he thought that state of things had now passed away, and that drunkenness was now more recognised as a sin. The working classes began to see how many homes were made miserable by drunken habits, and he thought that the people saw more clearly that it was a sin, and that there was no sin that condemnation was written upon more than upon that of drunkenness. People used to look upon drunkenness more as a festivity, but he thought that idea was exterminated, but it was still a very hard up-hill fight, and many did not yet see how great a sin it was. He thought there was a great improvement in the general community about those matters, but there was still a great deal to be done in the way of awakening those persons, and to let them know how sad were the consequences of drunkenness. There had been very little done in the Houses of Parliament in the matter, and the leaders of it had allowed it to fall away. The evil consequences of the sin was not in the poorer classes alone, but also in the middle and higher classes of society, and he did not think the other classes had learnt the lesson of the terrible evil so well as the working classes. The working classes must make their will known.

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