



Temperance Department.

HOME AND SOCIAL WINE DRINKING IN THE UNITED STATES.

It is a little depressing, to say the least, to find it necessary to fight our moral battles over again and again; but social, like civil, struggles are born of the perverted appetites and passions of the human heart, and while human nature remains in its present condition, no lapse in virtue or ebb in the progress of the race is impossible.

A generation ago, and more, it was found to be hopeless to attempt to put a stop to drunkenness, except by a general movement on the part of the better portion of the community voluntarily denying itself of even the temperate use of wines and intoxicating drinks, training by precept and example the youth to shun all spirituous beverages, and creating a powerful popular sentiment against the use of alcoholic liquors. It was found impossible to break up public drinking and curb or cure the vice, while wines were used at the tables of respectable persons, at marriage parties and other festivals. It was found, indeed, to be no ordinary undertaking, to attempt to break up the domestic custom of all previous time. The use of wine was esteemed so indispensable an element of a social occasion, it had apparently been so sanctified in Gospel history, it required so much courage at first to withdraw it from the table where it was expected, to refuse it where others used it and it was proffered as a courtesy, that it was many years before the "best families" removed it from their sideboards, and ceased to offer it to callers and place it upon the table. It was found, however, that the whole reform hung for a long period just here. As long as these social customs prevailed, drunkenness would continue and the lowest resorts would find ample support in administering the *coup de grace* to those whose appetites were first inflamed at the tables in their own homes, and were nourished by the heated beverages provided at evening parties.

For many years, however, except in a certain stratum of the so-called "upper classes," the wine-cup, especially among professed Christians, was at length quite generally banished from sight. It had no place at the daily meals; it was not provided at evening parties; it did not appear at the marriage ceremony; and was rather conspicuous for its absence than its presence at the table of hotels, in New England at least. A generation quite temperate in the matter of stimulating beverages came up under these wholesome influences. Strenuous restriction and prohibitory laws were enacted, and executed with great vigor; drinking became a shame and an offense; the selling of it more or less disgraceful. The work of reforming inebriates was undertaken with much success, and a change in the drinking habits of the nation was secured, so marked as to attract the attention of our British neighbors, and to awaken an agitation and crusade in the same direction, which has not yet exhausted its force.

But during the last ten or fifteen years, particularly during the war and the speculative period that followed, in which fortunes were accumulated in a day and men rose suddenly from comparative poverty to large wealth, the social customs of the people have been greatly deteriorated. The wine-cup has been gradually returning to its conspicuous place at the fireside and in the festival. Men have forgotten the terrible occasion which induced its banishment. Some ministers have rebelled against the limitation placed upon their indulgence of what they have made themselves believe to be a harmless beverage if temperately used, and against being bound by the same voluntary obligation which is assumed by a helpless drunkard, and which, in his case, they believe to be useful. After a few open protests of this description, and declarations of unrestrained liberty from well-reputed divines, it was not long before the sparkling cup appeared openly upon the tables of wealthy, professed Christians, and scruples against its use at weddings and festivals began to give way. It is a significant and singular fact that, at this moment, the accomplished clergyman in New York who is fighting most vigorously the fiend of intemperance in his lowest haunts, and opposing his open breaches upon the Sabbath, has been among the most outspoken in his defense of his own table from the criticisms of total abstinents, and positive in refusing to have his social liberty restrained by the judgment of others. He can conceive of no punishment too severe for the brute who, trampling upon the holy Sabbath, the law of the land, and the moral sentiments of the com-

munity, deals out fatal beverages to tempted and helpless men and women; and still his own expressed sentiments and well-known example become the occasion and the apology for hundreds of young people, who enter upon a life of social indulgence which is sure to end in inevitable drunkenness, poverty and wretchedness, beguiled by the well-intended but mistaken defense of a temperate use of wine by this eminent minister.

In one of the most impressive addresses delivered at the late Episcopal Congress in Boston, by one of the most accomplished and trusted of our elder physicians, himself by no means urging or even recommending the acceptance of the heroic measures of pronounced temperance men, the speaker showed, by terrible actual incidents occurring in his practice, that even the most temperate use of wine, at the home table, without the addition of deep social draughts, would induce such a physical condition that one would suddenly find his whole vital machinery worn out, and himself beyond all the power of medical skill to give relief from excruciating pains and a terrible death. It is also a well-known and dreadful fact, that, while in the first generation, the use of wine may be controlled and limited to moderate quantities, in the instance, of the children of wine-drinkers, the appetite when awakened becomes a madness, and is absolutely uncontrollable. It probably rarely ever occurs that, in a family where wines are placed upon the table and used by parents, some of the children do not become hopeless drunkards. Our own observation has gathered multitudes of the saddest and most heart-rending illustrations of this fact.

We are astounded to know that some whom we have learned to esteem as professed Christians have yielded to appetite and social customs in this respect. We can hardly conceive of any possible Christian activity, or even benevolence, that can be considered a compensation for the actual evil accomplished by such an example of indulgence. If one cannot, for Christ's sake, for the salvation of a generation of young people, for the possible rescue of frightfully tempted men, deny himself of such fleshly indulgence as the stimulating and inebriating cup, he is not worthy of the kingdom of heaven. It was thus in the former years with us; the theatre, the card-table and the wine-cup were the Egypt that was heartily left behind when the old saints started for the promised land; and a sad fact it is that any pilgrims should sigh again for the leeks and onions they have left behind them.—*Zion's Herald*.

BRAIN DETERIORATION.

We have now learned that even moderate drinking, in ninety cases out of a hundred, temporarily paralyzes the nerves that govern the minute muscles that hold the arteries and the veins in proper tension. This injury of the finest nerves allows the circulatory system to become relaxed and so your heart beats faster; but there is no more force in the heart. The whole effect is like the acceleration produced in the motions of a watch when you take the pallets off the machinery. Dr. Richardson, Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, has lately told us in his Cantor lectures on alcohol, a work introduced to America by Dr. Willard Parker, that "alcohol paralyzes the minute blood vessels and allows them to become dilated. The dilation follows on the reduction of nervous control, which reduction has been induced by alcohol." (Lect. III.) Therefore there is a flush in the face; and not only there, but the flush pervades the whole system, and especially the brain, for which everybody knows that alcohol has a peculiar local affinity.

Go to the Hunterian Museum in London and men will show you skeletons of two lions, both poisoned, and with the same kind of poison. There is a mark on these skeletons at the point where that poison expended its chief force. All physicians know that poisons have a local action within the system, and that sometimes a rifle-ball has no more definite point of impingement upon whatever it is aimed at than poison has in relation to the object against the welfare of which it is directed. We must remember that the special local affinity of alcohol is for the brain; and that the relaxing of the fibres which allows the heart to beat faster is not a sign of health, but of disease; and that the moderate drinker, in ninety cases out of a hundred, is thus honeycombed through and through with this relaxation. Its effects are seen first in a lack of moral feeling. But when fever strikes him down, when cholera attacks him, when sun's heat and life's heat come together, he breaks more easily than he otherwise would. In your remaining ten cases perhaps there may be apparent immunity for a while, but in old age a man is more brittle than he would be otherwise; and in the next generation, what do you get? Why, when there is a confirmed and inveterate habit of wine-drinking or other habit of prolonged, although moderate alcoholic stimulation, the succession of generations

differs in character usually not very far from what it was in Webster's family—colossal strength in the father of Webster; colossal strength in Webster; erratic strength in the son; lack of control in the grandson—a boy who made of his grandfather's amusements his whole occupation—and what the next generation would have been, the law of hereditary descent will tell you. Inexhaustible strength, eccentricity, moral weakness, and then the condition which your *Atlantic Monthly*, choice about its language, describes by the adjective "spooney"! Even giants may deteriorate to this stage in four generations.

On all the physical vices God is throwing the progress of the sciences as we throw spades full of earth on a coffin. "Apples of Sodom," "Circe's Enchantment," was the ancient language about all the physical vices; but the microscope and the scalpel are revealing to us, in characters of fire, the depth of those old metaphors.

SUPPRESSING INTemperance.

Seldom, if ever, has there been so much interest and active effort to suppress the multiplied evils of intemperance in different parts of the country as at the present time. Differences of opinion and of method prove how wide and deep is the feeling that prevails in this important matter. The army of attack upon indiscriminate liquor selling is just now operating in two separate wings, but there is no reason for any antagonism between them, for neither has any object to accomplish that is inconsistent with mutual co-operation. If men with different views as to the best methods cannot work in precisely the same way, they may at least sympathize in one another's efforts, and emulate each other in the zeal and patience with which they labor.

In Elmira, the Murphy movement has met with the success that has been so marvellous in other cities. Its peculiarity is the way it confines itself to purely moral agencies, and the care with which it avoids exciting hostility by violent attacks upon liquor dealers. This movement appears to be sweeping all before it. In the Essex County, New Jersey, Temperance Convention, last week, several persons of considerable prominence, who took an active part in the proceedings, spoke very strongly in regard to suppressive measures, and in Newark a league of voters has been formed for the purpose of vigorously shutting up drinking saloons, as far as is practicable, through legal methods.

There can be no doubt that the public opinion which tolerates the disregard of wholesome laws on this subject, is shameful. No effort should be spared that may in any way quicken public sentiment, so that our public officers will be compelled at least to respect the obligations of law. But let all the friends of good order, those who wish to see vice and crime and pauperism diminished, as they certainly will be by diminishing the number of fountains from which they flow, abstain from all opposition to one another and unite heartily in drying up the sources, by a rigid enforcement of the laws that are now on the statute book. If any of them can do better by persuading men to abstain altogether from that which degrades and debases and destroys them, let them do it, but, if we cannot do all, let us do what we can.—*N. Y. Observer*.

PREACHING TEMPERANCE.

At the anniversary of the Free Church Temperance Society Dr. A. Bonar, of Glasgow, said:

In connection with this subject of total abstinence, I may say that, being willing to do what the Church commands, I preach—when they tell us to do so—once a year on temperance; but I do not like so well to preach special sermons on this subject as to refer to it when a suitable opportunity offers in the course of Scripture exposition. My church is in a territorial district, and now and then a publican comes to the neighborhood, and he steps in and takes his seat; but I have scarcely found any of them stay a whole year—and yet I never preach temperance sermons, but whenever, in my exposition, I come to a passage that gives me an opportunity, I go fully into the subject. For instance, I lately came to the passage, "Woe to them that rise early and drink wine, and continue at night till wine inflame them." The margin says, "till the wine pursue them"—till the wine gets hold of them. Well, that is a grand text on the subject. Another day I came to the words, "greedy of filthy lucre." The meaning of that is a man following a base trade; and I never fail to tell my people that the publicans are "greedy of filthy lucre" in that sense. The consequence is, that I have never been troubled with publicans, except in the way of taking seats, for the last ten years. One man in that trade sent me a message that he was coming to me with a certificate from Paisley, and I sent back to him a message that he might save himself the trouble. Well, about four months afterwards he came to my house—for I will never go into their houses,

because people think it makes their houses respectable for a minister to go into them. I said to him when he called, "Did you get my message?" He replied, "Yes, I got it; but I have given up the trade." I would like to talk to the brethren about that mode of preaching temperance to which I have referred. I find it most effectual in the congregation—just to speak always when the subject comes up in the course of reading—never to pass over a point; and there are various other ways of working on behalf of temperance in going in and out among your congregations. But I confess that the way I work most is by my personal example. I tell everybody at a marriage, or anywhere else, that I would not taste a drop of wine. Many a time have they said "Oh! but this is a particular occasion; put it to your lips;" but I just reply, "No; I wish the company all the health you like, but I will use my own way of doing it." That is egotistical, but I think it is a testimony on behalf of the cause. I have been an abstainer, I am sure, for thirty-seven years, and I have never all that time had one serious illness, and even then I did not touch a drop of intoxicating liquor—so that I can say that I have had nothing stronger than tea or coffee for the last thirty-seven years, and I suppose I have better health, through the great kindness of God, than almost any minister of my acquaintance. Strong drink does not make a man strong.—*League Journal*.

FOLLOWING ADVICE.—There is one point to which I would like to call the attention of teetotalers. I find a good many people who say to me, I was a teetotaler for many years; but I became rather unwell, and the doctor said that I must take a glass of wine daily for some time. I broke my teetotalism then, and I have not been teetotal since. To such people I say, "You did not break your pledge by taking wine as a medicine when you were ill; but you broke your pledge by continuing the medicine after the sickness had left you." Some forty years ago I had a severe attack of typhus fever; the doctor ordered wine, and I drank I know not how much to keep the system from sinking. To subdue the inflammation the doctor also shaved my head, and applied a blister. Through the blessing of God on the means employed I completely recovered my former state of health, and as soon as I was well again, I discontinued both the wine and the blister. Had I continued the wine to this day, many people would have thought that I had done quite right; whereas had I continued to shave my head and wear a blister for these forty years, every one would have set me down as mad. I have reason to believe, however, that the blister did me more good than the wine, and on medicinal grounds had the best claim for being continued; but a word is enough to the wise, and you all understand my meaning.—*Rev. John Myles*.

A TERROR TO EVIL-DOERS.—The Mayor of Denbigh intends to ascertain at what houses people who indulge in drink get tipsy. Instructions have been given to the police to take down the names of public-houses which have supplied drink to every drunken man brought before the bench.—*Carnarvon and Denbigh Herald*.

— "Alcoholic liquors are the most stupendous curse that afflicts our land or the world! He who tampers with them, plays with a nest of adders. He who offers them to others, whether at the table, or in the New Year's entertainment, holds out an ensnaring poison to his fellowmen." A correspondent quotes the above as the words of the Rev. Dr. Cuyler, and asks ministers of Christ to put to themselves, individually, the question, "Am I less guilty than the persons above referred to, when I hand the intoxicating cup to communicants at the Lord's table?"

— The Newark, N. J., Conference recently pledged itself to total abstinence, and ordered its clergy to preach a temperance sermon the second Sunday in May, and passed a resolution of thanks to the sixteen members of the Legislature that voted for local option.

— A temperance restaurant has been established in Detroit by the Woman's Union, and it is proposed to erect a building to accommodate the immense audiences which assemble at the temperance meetings now being held there.

— A ton of ice is daily placed in the Sons of Temperance Fountain, in Independence Square, Philadelphia. This probably interferes with the business of the neighboring liquor-saloons.

We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.