

Temperance Column.

DRUNKENNESS AN EVIL. WHAT IS THE REMEDY?

BY THE REV. PREBENDARY AINSLIE, D.D., VICAR OF LANGPORT.

(From the Church of England Temperance Chronicle.)

(CONTINUED.)

But we are to be fellow-workers with God. And what is our work to be? To make sobriety easier and drunkenness more difficult, and to protect society against the evil that drunkenness entails on it.

All this implies restrictions on the drink traffic. Why is it just to impose such restrictions? Because the drink traffic is partly legitimate and partly illegitimate, and you cannot deal with the one without dealing with the other. It is legitimate to sell a glass of beer to a thirsty man, if he desires beer, as it is legitimate to sell him a cup of tea if he asks for it; but it is illegitimate to go on selling him beer till he falls down drunk. Still if the man himself were the only person concerned the beer trade might be left alone, but he isn't. The publican has gone on knowingly converting a man into a wild beast. He takes his money, the bread and clothes of his wife and children, and then turns him out into the street a danger to society. This is no legitimate refreshment trade. This is a trade that should be restricted and taxed and rated with unsparring hand.

Here, then, is another remedy—restriction—applied with a nice discrimination between the legitimate and illegitimate portions of the liquor sellers' trade.

What shall we say to punishment of the drunkard as a remedy of his drunkenness? If punishment takes the shape of a fine, it most frequently falls on the wrong persons—the drunkard's wife and family are pretty certain to bear their full share of the penalty. I am not sure that if the punishment were applied in the proper quarter it might not be effective. A man once thrashed his horse because it jibbed and wouldn't start, but he thrashed to no purpose. On examination it proved that the groom had put on the wrong collar, which galled the poor brute's neck. Who ought to have had the whip? A publican goes on taking a man's money and selling him drink which he knows will make him drunk and riotous and mischievous. Does no responsibility attach to him for that man's subsequent acts? I think it does.

What other remedies shall I suggest? Libraries, coffee rooms, workmen's clubs, Bands of Hope, and all the rest. Yes, we must go on trying them all, but there is one that I want to speak of, and that is the effort to change our social drinking customs. Much drinking is a mere custom. "What'll you take?" is a sort of friendly salutation; a bumper toast is in some places thought an essential expression of good wishes for your wel-

fare. This need not be. I merely throw out the suggestion, and in doing so would remind you that this especially is the work of our Non-Abstaining Section.

I must not trespass further on your time. If I have suggested any topics for discussion, and in any way indicated the true lines on which Temperance effort should run, I have done all that I ventured to attempt.

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