

forbid that I should tempt you : but I owe you a compliment and will pay it freely." I took the flask and flung it far over a rock into the waters of the lake beneath. The scene is before me at this minute, as vividly as when it happened : the youth literally danced for joy : capered backward and forward on the mountain summit, absolutely intoxicated by a pure draught of pleasure ; the compliment touched his warm Irish heart ; it went so far beyond his expectations ; it was so practical a comment upon his story, so comprehensible a mark of its approval. I never saw pleasure expressed in a manner so impossible to be mistaken.

It is likely that the youth has long since forgotten the transaction, but I have not forgotten it, and never can forget it. That day was a white spot in my life. The moral of this simple anecdote is obvious ; every temperance advocate, no matter how humble may be his position, weak his intellectual powers, and apparently inefficient his means, cannot say what may be the amount of good he is doing, when he tells to many, or to one, the blessings conferred by temperance on him. I date my conversion to Total Abstinence from that evening. My teacher was a rude lad, who could neither write nor read : but I, and with me those who have been influenced by my counsels and example, owe a deep debt of gratitude to that youth—my humble guide to Glendalough.

ARE "GOOD CREATURES" TO BE USED IF THEY CAUSE US TO SIN?

BY BENJAMIN PARSONS.

"Every creature of God is good!" How often this text is quoted against Total Abstinence, and not unfrequently with an air of triumph. But those who thus quote it seem to forget two very important facts :

First, that intoxicating drinks are neither good creatures nor God's creatures. In the proper sense of the term, alcoholic drinks are not creatures at all : they are the result of disorganization. All science demonstrates that they are poisons, certainly, therefore, not good as human beverages ; and all observation proves that they are the productions of human skill, or rather of human folly and extravagance. It is, therefore, a species of blasphemy to say that our allmerciful Creator is their author. What is this but to attribute the wickedness of man to the goodness of God?

Secondly, were the argument good for anything, it would prove too much. For, in the mouths of moderate drinkers, if it have any meaning, it imitates not merely that every creature of God is good in its place, but that every creature of God is good to be eaten or drunk! At this rate we ought to eat "wood, hay, or stubble;" all sorts of plants, vegetables and weeds ; all kind of earths, stones and metals ; and not only all sorts of insects, reptiles and animals, but to eat one another! And then it would be our bounden duty, also, to drink every description of liquid that could be proved to be the work of the Creator. In fact, we ought to do our best to eat the earth and drink the sea. It averts well for our cause that every argument brought against it may be reduced to an absurdity.

But instead of making our appetites and prejudices the interpreters of Scripture, we must allow the Bible to expound itself ; and especially ought we to listen to Him who spake as never man spake. Now the Saviour informs us that every good creature must be refused, rejected, and cast away, if they would cause us to offend or sin.

Every one will admit that the eye is a "good creature of God." Yet what does the Son of God say? "If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee." To "offend" in this text means to lead into sin, or to cause us to sin. Who can tell the value of the eye? or the pain and inconvenience arising from its loss? Yet the Redeemer tells us that this good creature of God, this master-piece of divine

skill, this window of the soul, this avenue of light, truth and joy, should be abandoned, if it become to us in any way an occasion of sin. Millions have perished in consequence of their following the "lusts of the eye;" millions in perdition mourn that they were not born blind, or even that they had not literally obeyed the divine injunction. Some tell us that we have no sanction for Teetotalism in the Bible, that the scriptures nowhere tell us to give up the use of these liquid poisons. Porter and beer, gin and brandy, are not, they say, mentioned in scripture, therefore we ought to drink them daily. But neither are arsenic, oxalic acid, the deadly nightshade, or prussic acid, therein mentioned ; therefore we ought to drink these also. Instead of countenancing such folly as this, our Lord's words command us to reject the use of the most valuable of his gifts, if they cause us to sin.

How much might be said respecting the value of "a right hand," or "a right foot?" What would the world be without hands or feet? Take away every man's right hand, and what a helpless race we should have become. Sir Charles Bell's work on the hand should be read by every one : he has there shown, also, the superiority of the right hand to the left. Now the Son of God especially mentions the right hand, the most valuable member of the two :—"If thy right hand cause thee to sin, cut it off and cast it from thee." Better lose a hand, a right hand, than sin against God. What a high order of piety is here! What self-denial enjoined! What a sacrifice demanded! Like the eye the hand is a stupendous exhibition of Divine wisdom, and power and goodness. The hand is a "good creature of God;" and yet this precious gift of Heaven, this token of Divine love, is to be given up and actually destroyed, if it become to us a source of temptation. Surely if such valuable members are to be cast away rather than sin against God or our neighbour, then one would suppose that none but an intoxicated brain would venture to intimate that poisonous liquors which have sent myriads to perdition are not to be given up because the words "Teetotalism," or "Total Abstinence," are not mentioned in the sacred writings.

Volumes might be written on the value of the human foot. Talk with the man who has lost it, and now has to move about with a crutch or a wooden leg ; what a long tale he will give of the thousand inconveniencies arising from its loss! Still, our Lord says, "If thy foot cause thee to sin, cut it off." Every one must admit that the foot is a "good creature of God;" yet the same power that formed this valuable member, the same love that gave this precious gift says respecting it, "If it cause thee to sin, cut it off."

Every object that prevents our perfect and implicit obedience to the will of our Lord—that which is most pleasant and most profitable—the darling idol, the lucrative employment formed and carried out on sinful principles, from there because they become snares, and traps and stumbling-blocks either to our own soul, or to the souls of others, by which we or they may fall into the pit of perdition ; from these we must be separated, these must be given up and cast away. It is not enough, as Dr. Adam Clarke observes, to shut the eye or to stop the hand ; the one must be "plucked out" the other must be "cut off." Neither is this enough, we must cast them both from us. Not one moment's truce to an evil passion, sinful appetite, or an unlawful or injurious occupation.

Here, then, we have a Divine sanction for Teetotalism although the word is not mentioned. For if good creatures of God are to be plucked out, cut off, and cast away when they cause us to sin, then, surely, the most baneful poison, the vile productions of human art, caprice and cupidity ought at once to be abandoned. It would be a waste of time to stop to prove that intoxicating drinks cause men to sin. They have hurled the best of men from the highest dignities and have sunk them below the swine here, and have sent