

cester, Massachusetts, and an habitual drunkard, signed the pledge of total abstinence. It was the turning-point of his life. That signature alone will forever justify the use of the pledge as an instrument of reform. Mr. Gough for seven long years had not entered a house of God for worship, had not perused an improving book, had been of little use to his fellow-men. He had disregarded those pious counsels which guided his childhood and early youth, had buried himself in imbruting pleasures, and was about to sink into a grave of ignominy and oblivion. But God gave him strength to say "*I will be free*," for God had a work for him to do. With a struggle, the anguish of which no one can know but through experience, he burst the hellish bonds and entered on a new and grand career; and to-day, after twenty-five years of magnificent toil, John B. Gough stands an idol of the public, the most popular of living lecturers, perhaps it is not too much to say, celebrated as an orator above all who use the English tongue.

Two months after he had signed the pledge, the Worcester *Waterfall*, under date of December 31, 1842, speaks thus of Mr. Gough. It is the first notice of him as a reformer that ever appeared in print; and gives, it must be confessed, a pretty just outline of the coming man.

"We understand that this talented and worthy young mechanic is about to commence the business of lecturer on temperance. We wish him success; and we have no doubt he will attain it. He possesses, we believe, most of the elements of a popular speaker. He expresses his views in plain and intelligent language, without effort; and what he says comes warm from the heart. With good powers of mind and a lively fancy, added to wit and humor, he cannot fail to please and instruct his hearers."

Three days subsequently to this notice, Mr. Gough delivered his first temperance lecture, by appointment, in the town of Leicester, Mass. The next evening, Jan. 4, 1843, he lectured in Upton. A reporter calls him "a young Washingtonian about 25 years of age," and says the lecture was one of the best ever given in town." At this period, Mr. Gough enlivened his lectures by singing songs, among which one especially popular was the "Rumseller's Lament."

A fortnight afterwards he lectured in Upton again, "in the Congregational Church, which was crowded above and below." It was in a style "still more eloquent and interesting," and at its close many signed the pledge. By April 20th of that year, more than 4,000 names had been obtained to the pledge of total abstinence, at his lectures. On the 20th of June the number had increased to 6,000, and in a year it reached 13,000. In October he spoke in Faneuil Hall, Boston, and in the Odeon. His reputation was now established, and his terms were \$5.00 a lec-

ture. But if it was not convenient to pay this sum, he refused not to speak. To reform his suffering fellow-men was his primary object, and to benefit others rather than himself is his rule of duty still. Had it been otherwise he would now be rich, while in fact he is only "in comfortable circumstances." The first place where Mr. Gough ever received anything for speaking on temperance was West Boylston, Mass., where was collected for him, by passing round a hat at the close of a speech, the sum of two dollars, in "four-pence ha'pennies and coppers." His stated price is now \$200 per lecture.

The years in which he secured the largest number of pledged abstainers were 1850-1, in the former of which 32,007, and in the latter 29,740 persons thus recorded themselves at his meetings. Up to 1852, a period of ten years, there were of signers to the pledge through his direct influence, as is shown by accurate records kept by himself, 130,952 persons. He has now in his possession three large books containing 70,000 signatures, with some of which are connected most interesting and thrilling histories.

In August, 1853, Mr. Gough visited England to lecture six weeks in the service of the British Temperance League. *Punch* characteristically announced his coming, but his ridicules only helped to fill up Exeter Hall, where, on the 2nd of August, Mr. Gough made his *debut* in that world-renowned place, and achieved a splendid success. He has since delivered *ninety-five* other addresses upon the same platform, on the same subject. Dr. Campbell, the giant of *The British Banner*, said of him after his first effort:

"Oratorically considered, he is never at fault. From first to last, it is nature acting in one of her favorite sons. His whole speaking was eminently true. . . . Nothing could exceed the unity of the impression, while nothing could be more multifarious than the means employed to effect it. It was a species of mortar-firing, in which old nails, broken bottles, chips of iron, and bits of metal, together with balls of lead,—anything, everything partaking of the nature of a missile,—was available. The compound mass was showered forth with resistless might and powerful execution."

Exeter Hall was not the only scene of his triumphs in the metropolis of the world. He spoke subsequently in Drury-Lane Theatre to 5,000, Lord Shaftesbury presiding, with twenty titled noblemen upon the stage. At this meeting *Soyer*, the famous London cuisinier was present. After lecture, he rushed frantically up to Mr. Gough, exclaiming "Oh, magnifique! I will give you little book to help you cook your vittels." In Surrey Gardens, he spoke to 17,600 people at once, it being the largest audience ever he addressed.

Mr. Gough has delivered on the subject of temperance mainly, above 5,300 speeches, to audiences who have been calculated to aver-