

Distilled spirit, like a destroying angel, was travelling over the land, so that there would be but little extravagance in asserting, that there was not a house in which there was not one dead. I have often appealed to immense assemblies, and asked, is there a single individual present, who can lay his hand on his heart, and say, this heart never felt a pang on account of ills inflicted by spirituous liquor on any relation or dear friend? And that I was fully warranted in believing that none such could be present, will be evident from the following facts:

On one occasion, in a remote country district, a young man stated at a Temperance meeting, that he had in his possession, a list of twenty-two persons, with whom he had been acquainted, who had lived in his vicinity, and all of whom perished miserably from the use of spirituous liquor. On another occasion a young man made a similar statement respecting twenty-nine persons in a small district. A magistrate of county Antrim states, that in his own recollection, forty-eight individuals have, in a country district, within two miles of his own residence, been cut off prematurely by the use of spirituous liquor. It appears from a tract of the British and Foreign Temperance Society, containing a history which I furnished them of seventeen houses constituting the side of a street in a respectable village, that in a very few years, spirituous liquor made, in every house, without exception, ravages, to which those of fever or cholera can bear no comparison, when weighed in the balances of eternity.

Such facts as the preceding, give a faint idea of what Ulster was when Temperance Societies commenced.

Blessed be God, Ulster is very different now. The writings and addresses on behalf of temperance have attracted an attention throughout the province, which none on a similar subject ever did; and that this attention is unabated, appears evident from the multitudes which still crowd public meetings, even where the subject has been repeatedly advocated for a number of years. Every one seems convinced that the subject is one of deep interest; and wherever a public meeting is held, almost all the profligate drunkards of the neighbourhood are usually found deeply affected hearers.—Through the instrumentality of the press, of sermons, and addresses, the public mind has been prodigiously enlightened; and a death blow has been given to many of the prejudices, through which spirituous liquor was imagined to be useful, if not absolutely necessary for persons in health; very many even of those who oppose Temperance Societies, acknowledging, that for persons in health, spirituous liquor is utterly useless, and the multiplied reasons once urged for its

use, being now extensively viewed as the offspring of ignorance, or deceptions practised by self-interest and drunken appetite. Of those spirit drinking customs, which in time past were the great school of drunkenness, some have received a heavy shock; and others, in large districts, are nearly extinct. In some parishes, public meetings have voted the entire discontinuance of services with distilled spirits, at wakes and funerals; while, in other cases, the same has been effected by voluntary associations; and many who still hug their own dear glass, have ceased to throw temptations in the way of their servants by giving them spirituous liquor; while to drunkards they recommend, not taking a little moderation as formerly, but entire abstinence. From a large number of session-houses (vestries) the whiskey bottle has been banished; and very seldom it has the impudence to show itself at a baptism or social party, where any temperate minister of the gospel is present. Common politeness induces many to refrain from distilled spirits in the presence of the temperate, while some who have little acquaintance with common politeness are restrained by conscience, and a sense of shame. A few, but unfortunately only a few, spirit-sellers have, from conscientious motives, renounced the trade; while, in some towns, Temperance Hotels have been established. That in Waring-street, Belfast, one of the rooms of which is the Belfast news-room, is one of the most extensive, comfortable, and cheap establishments in Ulster.

About one hundred and eighty Temperance Societies have been established in the province, in which are enrolled the names of above two hundred ministers of the gospel, of different denominations, including a large proportion of the eminent talent, piety, and Christian zeal of the church of Christ in Ulster.

It is a general truth, that those in each district who are most distinguished by deeds of unwearied Christian benevolence, are the warmest and most useful friends of the temperance reformation. In some towns, we have the ministers of Christ of all denominations in our ranks, and in extensive districts, we have the majority of them; in a number of congregations the members of session are all members of the Temperance Society, in some there are few families one or more of whose members have not been enrolled on the list of the temperate. The temperance reformation must of course be accomplished by means of moral influence; and that it will be thus accomplished I have no doubt, not only from seeing such a powerful host of godly ministers on our side, but from having had so many evidences of the fact, that no good man can continue very long to resist the evidence which Temper-

ance Societies offer; and that, in proportion as persons become more decidedly religious, they become more decided supporters of the temperance reformation.

In Belfast and its vicinity, it would be difficult to find any religious charitable committee, the majority of whose members are not members of the Temperance Society: a much stronger statement may be made respecting the Sabbath school teachers of this and many other neighbourhoods, all of whose names, with a few exceptions, have been enrolled; and in not a few instances, where ministers of the gospel have been tardy in adopting temperance principles, or even where, as has often happened, they have, by preaching and practice, decidedly opposed such principles, some of their most serious parishioners, after endeavouring for a time to induce their pastor to take the lead, have themselves set forward in the work of reformation; and in spite of clerical indifference or opposition, have succeeded in effecting, throughout a wide district, a blessed change. The blessed change effected by temperance societies exhibits itself in a great variety of ways.

Spirituous liquor, in Ulster, had polluted all the fountains of happiness:—it had injured the health and temper of individuals;—it had marred the peace and prosperity of families;—it had corrupted the fidelity of social and mercantile intercourse;—it had swallowed up much of the disposition and means of benevolence;—it had paralyzed the discipline of the church, infected even the ministry of the gospel itself, and, shutting out the family of the drunkard from the Sabbath school and the house of God, and searing the consciences even of multitudes who drank only in moderation, it threw up barriers like walls of brass against the progress of the truth;—it choked the springs of devotion, and, under its baneful influence, much of the fruit of professed Christianity was as the grapes of Sodom and the clusters of Gomorrah. On all the best interests of humanity Temperance Societies have shed the blessings of heaven; and all benevolent institutions have felt their happy influence.

The hand of charity tried in vain to feed the hungry and clothe the naked, while a drunken mother sold her children's bread, and a drunken father pledged his children's clothes for drink. But Temperance Societies have reformed the drunken parents; and the family once hungry, naked, and miserable, are now fed, clothed, and happy.

In vain did the Sabbath school teacher go round from house to house on the Sabbath morning to procure a punctual attendance from the children of the drunken poor.—Miserable beings, how could they attend! One was decrepid and sickly from abuse by a drunken parent; another was cowering in