

Consider the Use of Opium by the Chinese." He had heard of the meeting from a friend, but was now enabled to peruse a full report of the eloquent speeches delivered by some eminent speakers, both lay and clerical, on this topic, which was, to him, one of the most interesting kind.

Having read through the report, he laid his brow upon his hand, leaned his elbow upon the arm of his study chair, and pursued a train of thought upon this subject, until, as it were, his mind was buried in the profundity of his cogitations.

He was roused from this state of abstraction by the opening of his study door, and the unannounced entrance of an elderly gentleman, who was dressed in a suit of parsonific black, who wore a pair of horn spectacles upon his nose, and carried a roll of paper in his hand. Before the surprise of the minister had subsided so as to allow of his asking for the name of his visitor, the stranger had drawn a chair close to that in which Mr. Wilson sat, and placing his hat on the table, said in a tone of easy familiarity :

"Don't disturb yourself, my dear sir, I came in thus as my business was pressing; the fact is, I want to lecture in your church to-morrow evening, and I want your countenance and assistance; my subject will be,—'The Promotion of the Use of Opium amongst the Chinese.'"

"Surely not!" exclaimed Mr. Wilson, "you cannot intend ———."

"Exactly what I have said," smilingly interrupted the old gentleman, "and you will agree with me when I have given you a few reasons for the habitual use of opium."

So saying, he unrolled the paper in his hand, and began to read in a clear and unembarrassed tone, to the following effect:—

#### REASONS FOR USING OPIUM.

1. The poppy, from which it is made, is bestowed by Providence.
2. Many gain a livelihood by making and importing it.
3. The Chinese have had it recommended by their ancestors.
4. Its excessive use is bad, but used in moderation it is good.
5. The Bible does not say, "Take no Opium."
6. Men feel revived when they have used it.
7. Working men in China and Turkey declare that they are strengthened to labour by the use of opium.

"Why, these very reasons are those which I meant to urge in favour of strong drink!" exclaimed Mr. Wilson, much astonished.

"Very likely," returned the old gentleman, "for the same reasoning will apply almost exactly in favour of opium and alcoholic liquor."

On a sudden, the stranger left the room, and as Mr. Wilson started up to follow him, he awoke from the sleep into which he had fallen over the newspaper, and found that his visitor had been merely an actor in the drama of a dream!

It is expected that the incidents of the vision were not unprofitable, for the minister went to the meeting, *not to oppose, but to learn*, and returned a convert to the doctrines of teetotalism!

#### A REASON FOR DRUNKENNESS.

Nearly forty years ago, we were sitting on a rock that juts out towards Plymouth Bay—a slight breeze swept up the channel and rippled its current; far off, but far between the projecting capes, was the line of the horizon, resting on the blue circle of the multitudinous sea. There was nothing to disturb the scene; it was the hour of noon; and silence reigns along the shore, and even within the habitations, because the table is there blessed before enjoyed, and the invocation, if it brings not down the spirit which it seeks, lifts up the heart which it reaches.

We had been despatched that day, with the dinner basket

and the bottle to the man labouring among the rocks, and gathering up the debris of the shore.

In these days, piety herself proffered the glass, and temperance solaced herself with the regular cup.

The man busied himself with his fare, but he tendered to us a portion of his food—we declined it, having already dined.

"I will not offer you anything from the bottle," said he, "it's bad, very bad for the young, and worse for the old. Never touch it, Joseph, as you hope for respect in life."

Let us say that the speaker was the son of one of the most respectable persons in the country, had been well educated, and started in manhood with a fine competency—but took to rum. From one grade to another he had gone down to the rank of a common labourer, in the town of his birth, and earned a miserable living for a wife and numerous children, by the most menial offices, and went home beastly drunk whenever he could get rum enough to make him intoxicated. He was a lost man, a miserable object.

"Never touch it," said he, "as you hope for respect in life. It is a deadly poison, palsyng all physical and moral powers; with its use, man becomes a brute, a slave to every one who wishes to command him; without it, temperate and industrious, he may be what he pleases.

"No man can hope for respect who indulges in rum; but temperate and with the education to be acquired in our schools, he must grow up in the respect of his fellow men; and in time, must obtain competency. Indulge in this," and he held up to the sun the half empty bottle, "and shame, poverty and toil follow; avoid it, and you command the services of every one that sins that way; may you never be thus commanded."

The man had been a sot, proverbially from our earliest remembrance, and though we knew he possessed a spirit of kindness towards others, we had never heard him thus refer to the sin that most easily beset him. We gazed, therefore, for some time upon him, before we ventured a reply; at length we said, in a tone marked rather by affectionate solicitude, than the forwardness of boyish impertinence: "If respect is only found by avoiding excess in drinking, why then, do we see so many forfeiting that respect?" Mr. ——— looked a little confused, but he was soon prepared with a reply.

"It is, perhaps, because they have no one to point out to them their errors."

"But," said we, "some know their own errors, and point out the consequences to others. Why do they not avoid them?"

A cloud passed across the face of the poor man; but it was a feeling of pain, not of anger. He rose from the ground on which he was sitting, and standing for a few moments by my side, his feelings gradually subsided to the calmness of the delightful bay on which we were looking.

"You ask," said he, "why they do not avoid the evil consequences of rum. Alas! you are too young to know the influences of appetite, when the means of gratification are within reach. You cannot know how desolating to every heart is the spirit of intemperance. At times it seems that good resolves will spring up, but if the temptation is not removed, the evil is repeated. Could there be found some powerful influence, some human beings to remove the sufferer from the plague, to raise him above the attack, he would, perhaps be saved; but who shall do it?"

"Look along the shore; nearly its whole extent is marked by barren sands or abraded pebbles. Not a spire of grass shoots up, for every tide washes the whitened surface; and should there at any time spring up beyond us a few green spots of herbage, the acrid waters of the returning spring tides would destroy it all. There is far up the bay, a single exception; Mr. ——— has redeemed, by his care, a portion of the shore, by shutting out the tide and elevating the sod;