

The difficulty of eking out the weekly stipend leads him to resort to shifts which sink him deeper in poverty, and are destructive of his personal independence. He opens an account with shopkeepers who hold out the flattering bait—'weekly payments taken here,' without considering that shopkeepers are far too shrewd to incur the risk of giving credit unless they protect themselves by a proportionate advance on the price, or a diminution in the quality of their goods. The usage of tradesmen to give and take large credit may be explained, if it cannot always be defended, by the strong inducements held out to them to do a larger amount of business than their available means would justify; but the man who works for weekly wages has no such plea for keeping a running account at the shop; for in his case it involves a positive loss without any corresponding advantage. He knows that, on receiving his wages, he has a specific sum to carry him on to the following week, and he also knows, or ought to know, that he will always do his marketing upon the best and cheapest terms when he carries his money in his hand.

In his household the same want of foresight will commonly be observable. If his wife be careless and slatternly, it can be no matter for surprise that all her domestic arrangements should be characterised by disorder and mismanagement; but even the most notable woman, if not seconded by the influence and example of her husband, will be met by almost insurmountable obstacles in any endeavor to carry out plans of judicious economy at home. There can be no doubt that much of the discord and misery so prevalent in the families of the poor, is to be traced to the want of a proper understanding between husband and wife as to the mode of laying out their earnings. Did they take a due estimate of their obligations to each other, and of the claims of their children, they would never want a motive for a thrifty expenditure of their means. The first step—usually the most painful—is in the present case simple—to a great extent practicable, and at all events worth the trial. If the poor man, supposing him to be in work, could only resolve to be a few shillings before-hand, instead of a few shillings behind-hand, he would find, in the new emotions experienced and the opening prospects presented to him, an ample compensation for any self-denial the act might involve.

But improvident habits are not peculiar to the poorest class of laborers; they are chargeable also to a great extent, and with much less excuse, upon skilful and intelligent artisans who obtain high wages. Numberless instances could be adduced, in our large towns, of men earning one, two, or more pounds a week, who, judging from the aspect of their homes, are in no respect in better plight than the worst-paid laborers. This state of things is no doubt mainly to be laid to the account of profligate habits, but it is also in part attributable to mismanagement, arising from ignorance or disregard of the plainest rules of domestic economy. That the degradation of numbers of the best-paid artisans is to be referred to personal habits, is evident from the fact that mercantile clerks are enabled to maintain their families respectably, and to educate their children, upon incomes scarcely exceeding on the average those realised by superior artisans.

#### INTEMPERANCE.

Another fruitful source of the depression and misery of the working classes is to be found in their widely diffused habits of intemperance.

It has been computed that, in the United Kingdom, upwards of sixty millions of pounds sterling are expended annually in stimulating drinks—beer, wine, and spirits—and when it is considered that probably more than half of this enormous consumption is by the classes dependent for the means of support upon manual labor, there can be little difficulty in accounting for the portentous growth of evils which bring desolation into thousands of families, and swell the criminal statistics of our country. The most superficial reference to the annals of our police courts, and to the reports of the governors and chaplains of our crowded jails, will serve to show that, in a large proportion of cases, the first step in crime has been preceded, and often directly caused, by indulgence in the intoxicating cup.

As there is no vice more ensnaring or more generally prevalent than intemperance, so there is none more ruinous to the bodies and souls of men. It is denounced by the word of God in terms that may well strike dismay into the hearts of its victims. Take, for example, the following:—'Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath

wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things. Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or he that lieth upon the top of a mast. They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.' Prov. xxiii. 29-35. What language could describe with more truth and force the terrible consequences of the intoxicating draught? Again, in the New Testament, the Apostle Paul addressing the Corinthian church, expressly names the intemperate man as one, among other gross transgressors, who, living and dying impenitent, will be excluded from the happy company of the redeemed in heaven. 'Be not deceived,' writes the apostle to that church, 'neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.' 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.

Once upon a time—so runs the legend—a man under demeriacal influence had imposed upon him the dire alternative of committing one of three different crimes submitted to his choice. In this grave dilemma he decided in favor of what he conceived to be the least heinous of the three, and accordingly committed an act of intoxication, but, it is added, while in that state, he was seduced to the commission of the other two! It matters not that the story, in its framework, is fabulous; it embodies a salutary truth which cannot be too strongly impressed upon the votaries of intemperance. Men who endeavor to persuade themselves that a vice so extensively prevalent and so leniently dealt with by the laws of the land, cannot be of that turpitude which is ascribed to it by the word of God, should at least open their eyes to the fact, that it is the prolific parent of some of the gravest evils which afflict society and bring disgrace and ruin upon families. Idleness, waste, insolvency, the grosser forms of licentiousness, theft, quarrelling, outrage, and murder are, in innumerable instances, to be traced directly to excessive indulgence in strong drink.

With respect to the long-pending question between the advocates of temperance, that is, of moderation in the use of fermented or alcoholic stimulants, and the supporters of the total abstinence principle, good and wise men will in all probability continue to differ in opinion. The advocates of temperance finding themselves under no temptation to exceed the bounds of moderation, and not discovering in the New Testament the entire prohibition of any meats or drinks, maintain that it is the abuse and not the use of strong liquors that is to be avoided and discouraged. The supporters of total abstinence, on the other hand, looking simply at the broad and undeniable fact that intemperance, far more destructive in its ravages than cholera, is ever beguiling to their ruin thousands and tens of thousands of our population, maintain that no compromise should be held with the enemy, that the single glass must be refused with a decision as prompt as if poison were known to lurk in its dregs.

It ought to be conceded to the advocates of total abstinence, that in dealing with that class—a sadly numerous one—who are actual drunkards, or who have an evident propensity to become such, the safer course is to take their written pledge of abstinence, because a feeling of honor will, in the absence of christian motives, be influential in keeping many firm to their purpose. But the measure, good in itself, is open to abuse. Not a few, and especially reformed drunkards, are in the habit of representing the virtue of abstaining from strong drink, as if it comprised the whole duty of man; whereas the bible, the only unerring standard of morals, assigns to each of the virtues its appropriate place, and exhibits them all in harmonious combination. The divine law does not, by marking out some evil habits for peculiar condemnation, afford the slightest countenance to the indulgence of others. It denounces with strict impartiality not only the sin of the drunkard, but every illicit appetite and passion, and every excess even in things lawful. 'Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand,' writes the apostle to the Philippian church, ch. iv. 5. The passage is suggestive of the idea that the whole man—body, soul, and spirit—should, like a citadel, be carefully guarded at all points, with every sentinel at his post, and all the approaches secured against attack, either by