

shield myself so impenetrably in belief regarding anything that light cannot reach me; but so far I have seen or heard nothing to cause me to doubt. Furthermore I am fully persuaded that what is right is always expedient—no matter how direful the consequences may seem to our dim visions—and that to advocate less than the very best and highest good we are capable of conceiving is to leave good undone and do harm.

In your letter the question is asked, "Is it not absolutely necessary to devise means whereby the selfish, vicious, and criminal may, by prevention, limit reproduction?" With any faith in temporizing I should say yes; but as before intimated I believe it better to "yearn and struggle forever than accept less than the ultimate best." Let us have even a few magnificent, true, pure men and women with enough heart, brain, and health to work for this end among the criminal and pauper classes, and they will learn self-control. Once learnt, how vastly better than anything short of that. The masses may not at present be capable of self-control, but I assure you, Doctor, that the paupers cannot and will not buy ten-dollar syringes.

Provided a man or woman can practice continence without injury to the physical system, can any harm come of it? Taking for granted a negative reply, I want to inquire if you do not believe that a vast amount of physical injury, moral and intellectual degradation, and spiritual death—which latter you may not believe in, though I do—result from sexual excesses besides the evil of overproduction? Now, what time is spent enforcing the necessity of prevention is lost from teaching self-control, and even where prevention is secured these other evils resulting from sexual excess remain untouched. We have the ground all to go over again and many who might have learned continence have failed to do so by having what is seemingly a pleasant substitute offered them. Is it not better to cover the whole ground as fast as we go along? "The greater includes the less."

You say: "Physicians can recall to mind hundreds of cases wherein the usual conjugal relations have restored those who were wasting with mental and physical disease." (Of course the physical induced the mental.) Presumably these were bereaved companions who might not have been such but for their sexual excesses, unmarried libertines who had begun to mend their ways, and the victims of self-abuse. It does not seem to me that these are fair illustrations of the evils of continence. An acquaintance of mine left off the use of tobacco, and in about three weeks he was taken sick on the cars. To use his own words, "I believe I should have died if I had not crawled into the smoking car and smelt the smoke." He persevered in his abstinence which caused him a severe illness and after that his health was better than before.

I have known drunkards to fail in health by leaving off liquor, but these instances did not convince me that tobacco and alcohol are healthful and necessary, nor even that if these men had died in their effort at purity, it would not have been in a good cause and incomparably better than to save their lives by the opposite course and go on propagating their like.

Had these men believed from boyhood up that these things were hurtful and steadily avoided their use, how much better it would have been. Better still if they had been born of such parents, but, however much importance we attach to heredity, we cannot ignore the influence of education and habit. Heretofore these three have combined to convince us that continence is injurious. Church, state, and society have been another trinity on this

point. So it is not wonderful that under existing conditions continence is hurtful to the majority, for it is marvelously true that "as a man thinketh in his heart so it is with him." Suppose a man like Dr. Tanner in every respect save the belief that he could fast forty days, compelled by law, conscience, or any real or fancied necessity, to abstain from food for even thirty days, would he not die? I would not give much for his chances of life.

The many are born of incontinent parents, taught that continence is hurtful; what wonder that to such it is hurtful? Let them learn the opposite, and vital force will not be so recklessly expended as at present, and the children of another generation being purer, will have less need of self-control and find that the "law of the spirit of life in Jesus Christ has made them free from the law of sin and death."

Pardon me if I seem to write dogmatically. Not being able to write scientifically, dogmatism ill becomes me. I feel very earnestly on this subject and have tried to write logically. If I have failed, I shall be glad to be shown wherein. Yours truly, C. B. WHITEHEAD.

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[FOR DR. FOOTE'S HEALTH MONTHLY.]

Substance of a Discourse on Reform in Berkley Hall, June 5, 1881.

BY M. E. TILLOTSON.

THE progress of reform in its many branches has reached a phase demanding practical action. Theorizing no longer satisfies; it seems empty and delusive. Customs displaying accumulations of discordant vices call for changes that bring harmony through strength and purity. Generous souls noting the wrongs blent with poverty and tyranny yearn for power to alleviate suffering and establish lasting good. But standing in their way are olden customs, like hostile fortifications, menacing the advance of truth and high endeavor. This threatening array will oppose till firm resistance with healthful change makes inroads on usage, and institutes modes in unison with nature. Science in government, religion, commerce, social measures, and especially in hygiene, with equity in all things, is the aid at hand to be accepted and applied. What boots it that free thought and much knowledge brings hope to the wronged, if to silent evolution no human effort attaches to work out reformation? What boots it that benevolent, inspired souls are illumed with wisdom, and like gold-strung harps are swept by angel fingers, eliciting wonder and praise, if destructive usages are not re-modeled?—if the false, sordid, and oppressive are to remain, loathsome legacies of past evils to the weak children of the future? Shall we standing in view of dark ages, thrilling with anguish at the memory of past cruelty, and boasting of light and spirit growth, put forth no transitional energy, and by action and example open avenues of normal life, and eradicate the brambles of vice, disease, and folly that distort and enfeeble every human function? That sickness, fear and effeminacy are generally favoring the perpetuity of destructive habits, needs no proof. That such habits must be superseded, by those giving physical purity and strength, before mental and moral poise are adequate to the grasping and sustaining of liberty, is equally apparent. Creating and sustaining institutions that insure happiness requires the stability of character which only physical soundness can uphold. Families, communities, and nations equally demand hygienic habits of individuals; and the imperative demand is for pure nutriment and wholesome raiment. These are the