

wine. The servants seek their mistress, for this want must be supplied. She hears them and she knows their errand, but that thought so strong and new is struggling in her heart, and will not rest—her brother—*what* has driven him forth, and made him joyless, homeless, penniless? Shall that be made a pleasant thing to set before her children on their joyous festival?

From the dreary deck of that lone vessel on the distant sea, the mother's thoughts go wandering on; for darkness deepens all around, and deeds of darkness are preparing. How? All by that one opiate of the conscience—that one stimulus that nerves the trembling hand, and gives it momentary power. All are preparing by the self-same means. The nightly plunderer is making ready with the potent draught that wakes his courage, and lures him on with promised strength. The murderer whets his knife, and he, too, swallows down the maddening potion, that he may not think upon his mother's prayer beside his infant bed. The gamester hurries on to meet his doom, for he has deeply, madly drunk, and he is now prepared. And then the most forlorn of all earth's outcasts—the shivering wretch for whom no household hearth is blazing—she too is preparing. These, and ten thousand others, bent upon their deeds of darkness, are preparing by these means to strengthen and support themselves, in what their very nature, *unprepared*, would shrink from. Ah! we lay too much at nature's door. It is not always nature, but deep art, that takes away the staff of life, and makes of it an instrument of madness, sin, and death!

The mother thinks of all these things, and then she asks herself—Was ever pure and holy prayer prepared for by the same means and measure? Were ever men sent up to worship in the house of God, and did they worship there more truly for being thus prepared? Was righteous judgment ever given more advisedly, or councils held in which men saw the right and did it, in consequence of such a means of preparation? Were women ever made more holy, kept more pure, or had their innocence protected by such preparation? Alas! alas! how little does this picture show of hope from such a source. Is it not even darker and more appalling than the first?

The mother looks on both, and still she hears the joyous laughter and the sounds below. "*They need no preparation,*" she exclaims, "for innocent and harmless mirth!" And saying this, she bows her head, and bends her knee, to ask for help to bear her through this little sacrifice; not to herself, but others; and soon she rises with a brow more calm. Her look is full of peace. She has been strengthened to fulfil her trust. Not with sullen thoughts of the great cost of duty, sits the mother in her silent chamber—now her path is clear. She will not, cannot teach her children to enjoy what has been death to millions. She reasons thus—"If they require it in their pleasures, then how much more when days of pain or sorrow come upon them!"

Why are we ever sad when duty is made plain? The mother we have now described has learned a different lesson. She goes with cheerful smiles, and mingles in the merry group below, constrained by mingled love and duty, to bring forth the treasures of her mind, and make them blend and harmonize with the gay scene. Instead of the dark trace of recent conflict on her brow, all there is light and joy. She has deep cause for gladness—she has conquered custom in the cause of right.

But, "the wine, the wine," how many voices are demanding wine! Amongst them one which ought to be imperative. Here the mother would not venture to refuse, but that she breathes into her husband's ear an earnest whisper, begging him to let her try this one experiment, and if the pleasure of the evening flags, if guests grow dull and discontented, if her children feel themselves degraded in the

total failure of their promised festival, why, then, she will give way. The father willingly consents; for he has confidence in one who never has deceived him yet by acts of empty folly, or by fruitless and impracticable projects.

Thus the evening passes. Every time the wine is thought of, and asked for, by whispers in the mother's ear, she manages, by woman's tact, to turn the tide of interest into some fresh channel, making way for games untired before, and grudging nothing in the arrangement of her household regulations, so that good taste and better feeling are maintained. And thus the evening passes, until at last the wine is all forgotten, and young and ruby lips are fresh with juice of pleasant fruits, instead of the hot draught of burning appetite that makes a thirst for more.

And now the guests are gone; and while the freshness and the glow of conscious happiness is sparkling in her children's eyes, the mother calls them round her, and explains the strange omission at their evening's feast; for she is one who could not sleep upon the thought of having practised on a trusting heart, without entire and perfect confidence. In the end she asks them if their happiness was less, than on any other birth-day festival. "Oh! no, no," is the ready answer from all at once—"we had such quantities of fruit, and all went on so well; and you, mamma, were so delightful; we will never ask for wine again, if you don't wish it." "Remember this, then," says the mother, as she kisses them, and draws them closer, "if we leave off the use of wine, let no one feel the want of it; but let us each and all endeavour to supply its place by pleasant conversation, cheerfulness, and general good feeling, so that none of our guests may go away dissatisfied, thinking the absence of this accustomed stimulant has been the cause of the dull evening they have spent."

CHRISTIANS MAY BE ABSTAINERS.

CONSIDERATIONS WHICH JUSTIFY THEIR BECOMING SO.

To their contemporaries reformers generally appear fanatics and innovators. The generation in which they live must pass away before their characters are understood and their views embraced. Although indifference, misrepresentation, and scorn meet us in our efforts to establish the only radical principle on which deliverance from the scourge of intemperance can be secured, we must not therefore be greatly discouraged. Many avoid us because they have no heart for benevolent actions of any kind. To them it is no matter though sin should desolate every dwelling, provided it only spares their own; no matter though godliness should languish in the church, provided they get to heaven themselves.—Caring not, therefore, about the evils over which we especially mourn, it appears not worth their while to examine whether the remedy we propose be adequate or not. Others of a nobler spirit honestly desire rightly to understand our principles and operations, and only hold their assent and efforts in abeyance until they can conscientiously afford both. It is in the hope of being useful to this latter class that we propose to speak month by month, until we have placed before them what has been sufficient to satisfy our own minds, and to incorporate among the principles of our moral constitution the benign influence of abstinence.

Believing that we shall bespeak a favourable consideration of the principle itself, when we have named the considerations which have induced us to embrace abstinence as a means of good, we shall content ourselves at present with a specification of these.

The use of drink as a source of misery has demanded remedial measures, and justified our adoption of abstinence as alone adequate to a removal of the evils complained of.

Were any one at all conversant with ordinary life to write out a full detail of all the instances of evil arising from drinking with which he was personally acquainted, and give