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An "Inventory" without a "Valuation."

BY AN EXPERIENCED APPRAISER

A popular lecturer, while recently addressing a large audience on the merits of the Total Abstinence principle, said,—“I cannot, in the course of one lecture, enumerate a tithe of the advantages which will be sure to result from the adoption of our practice. Dryden, in his description of Eleonora, says,—

A multitude of virtues passed along,
Each pressing foremost in the mighty throng
Ambitious to be seen, and then make room,
For greater multitudes that were to come.”

But Dryden's heroine had not a vaster crowd of excellencies than we attribute to our beloved Temperance. In short,” continued the lecturer, “I consider it no exaggeration to say of Teetotalism what is said of ‘godness,’—of which, indeed, strict sobriety is an important and component part,—that it is, ‘profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and,’—independently,—‘of that which is to come.’”

I confess that this eulogium upon Teetotalism somewhat startled me. I was not prepared to contradict the assertions of the lecturer, yet I questioned at the moment the propriety of giving them such bold utterance in a mixed assembly. Then I paused: I reflected. I ran hastily over the history of some twenty or thirty persons, members of the Society with which I was more immediately connected; and I soon found myself fully prepared to bear the lecturer out in the glowing statements he had made. I was satisfied that he had not used “great swelling words of vanity,” but “words of truth and soberness.” I saw that Teetotalism had been thus “profitable” to many with whom I was acquainted. It had made them truly comfortable as to the life that now is;” and,—as a handmaid to Reason,—it had brought them to know Him who alone can make “the life which is to come” an existence of speakable and never-ending happiness.

For the confirmation of my own mind, and for the encouragement,—perhaps for the information,—of some of whose hands this paper may fall, I will select one of which I regard as a fair average of some fifty to which I could readily refer. I can vouch for the correctness of the details, as they relate to an individual whose history I am well acquainted, and whose life and residence I am able to furnish.

My friend became a total abstainer from strong drink just nine years ago, in consequence of attending one of the weekly meetings of a Society in his neighborhood; and of carefully reading a tract which one of the committees put into his hand. I will not now refer to a course of life previous to that period, except to remark that he had, while young, been thrown into asso-

ciations very unfriendly to sobriety—that an appetite for strong drink was created, and indulged, till it became a ruling passion—and that, under its influence, his health was impaired, his property wasted, his character, as a tradesman and professing Christian disgraced, and himself, his wife, and children brought into circumstances of want, and of consequent discomfort. To form some adequate idea of the change effected in his condition by the instrumentality of Teetotalism,—for I speak of Teetotalism as an instrument only, in the hands of a wise and gracious Providence,—I present the following “INVENTORY” of his “goods and chattels,” and other “miscellaneous effects.” For reasons which will appear, I shall affix no “valuation” to the various items.

As to his DWELLING, it is a five-roomed house in a neat paved court, leading out of a principal thoroughfare in the heart of the metropolis; and is every way suited for the convenience and comfort of a family in the condition of life in which he is placed. But to my friend's “effects.”

Imprimis, A SOUND CONSTITUTION. His health, naturally good, was materially injured by his drinking habits; it is now completely restored, and he has entirely lost an asthmatic cough with which he was sorely harassed by day and by night. And, instead of being almost continually “under the doctors' hands,” as was formerly the case, he has assured me that “it has not cost him four-pence a year for medicine for himself since he became a Teetotaler.” The result is an activity and cheerfulness about his ordinary business transactions to which he had, for years been a stranger. If I affix no “valuation” to this item, it is because health is a blessing above all price, to regain which, when lost, men will swallow repeated doses of nauseous medicines—undertake long journeys—submit to many privations—and pay large sums to those who are accounted skilful in the healing art.

Secondly, A VIGOROUS INTELLECT. My friend was not naturally dull, nor had his education been altogether neglected. But his use of strong drink had greatly blunted his energies, and had lessened his desire and weakened his capacity for improvement. Since he has become a Teetotaler, there is a freshness and vigor about his perceptions: he has a love for reading, and a facility for digesting what he reads. From the use only of a well-furnished mind, he is now able to interest and instruct others; and large audiences have often testified their approbation of his sensible and judicious addresses. Here, again, I affix no “valuation,” for if health of body be invaluable, what shall be said of health of mind?