

of England; have spent years in diligent and laborious examination of the subject; have expended upon it the whole strength of mind and ability that it pleased God to give them; they have made statistical returns, embracing almost millions of facts; they have spared no pains, no labour, in collecting the result and publishing it to the world; and yet you think that you know more about the subject than all these men, who have bestowed upon it their united wisdom, and the labour and devotion of years. Let me advise you, my good friend, not to condemn yourself to perpetual ignorance on any one important subject, for I doubt not, but there are many upon which you are a sensible man, and why should you not be so upon all? Why should you remain wilfully ignorant upon so important a subject as this, involving, as it does, the happiness of millions of your fellow-creatures?

B. You talk thus, but you will find a difficulty in bringing many to your way of thinking.—I believe that temperance societies are foolish and mischievous institutions.

A. I am far from requiring you to be of my way of thinking. I only ask you *first* to *inquire* and *then* judge for yourself. To form an opinion of his own is the right of every rational being. If, after patient enquiry, and seeking information from those sources whence information is to be obtained, you *still* come to the conclusion, that temperance societies are foolish or mischievous institutions, or that there are no existing evils in the country of a sufficient magnitude to call for their operation, you have an *undoubted right* to form these opinions; and the *sincerity* of your inquiry is an affair between you and that Being, who gave you the gift of reason that you might use it. But you have no right to make up your mind on the subject until after diligent and sincere inquiry; neither have you any right to dismiss the subject, without inquiring into it with all the powers of mind that God has given you.

B. Why am I bound to inquire into it at all?

A. Because it has been proved by the evidence of witnesses, examined before the British House of Commons, by the evidence of the keepers of all the penitentiaries and jails, of England, and Scotland, and Ireland: by the testimony of the judges of the land, the magistrates, the heads of the police department, and the physicians of our public hospitals, it has been *proved* I say, by the united testimony of all these, that intemperance among the lower orders, the chief cause of which, we must admit, is the use of fermented liquor as a beverage, is, directly or remotely, the cause of one half of the disease; two thirds of all the poverty; and more than three-fourths of all the crime of England. It has been proved by the best statistical returns, that more than five hundred souls die weekly the death of the drunkard, and enter the drunkard's eternity—that the amount of misery endured by the fathers, mothers, sisters, wives, and children, of these wretched beings, exceeds all calculation—that intemperance sends the drunkard home to abuse, and in many instances to murder his helpless wife, and starves her children. Now, unless you can believe that all these witnesses have entered into a conspiracy, without

any assignable reason, to deceive the public, and that all such statements are false, when a remedy is proposed, and especially a remedy that cannot fail, if universally adopted, to secure a sober population, you are bound to give it, at least, your candid and serious attention. But these evils, great as they are, are not to be mentioned in comparison with the moral desolation, the wreck and ruin of all moral principle, produced by intemperance. It is found by incontestible experience, that intemperance sears the conscience, corrupts the heart, and brings a blight upon every moral, every religious, every social and domestic feeling, and renders a man a nuisance to society, a sorrow and curse to his family, and a suicide to himself, in so dreadful a sense of the word, that it were good for him that he had never been born.

Now, the origin and the growth of intemperance have been ably traced to the mistaken customs of the age, and a remedy is proposed, which has wrought wonders in America, beyond all that could have been conceived possible, and has already done immense good in this and other countries of Europe: and which promises to become one of the greatest blessings to mankind.

B. I admit all the evils you have described, but I do not believe that Temperance Societies will cure them.

A. You have taken the best possible course to insure that they never shall, and if every body follows your example, of dismissing their claims without examination, and not even giving them a fair hearing, they certainly never will. But, my good sir, I say again, you have no right to form your opinion on this subject, which involves the happiness, temporal and eternal, of millions and millions of your fellow creatures (and you know not for how many generations yet to come) without bestowing upon it the most diligent examination, and all the thinking powers that God has given you.

Do, pray, come out of this absurd position, and read what the champions of the cause, and the geniuses of England and America have written upon the subject, and then form your opinion. If the cause were ten thousand times more valuable than it is, contempt prior to examination, would leave you still ignorant of its value.

In you, it may be thoughtlessness; but there are some subjects upon which thoughtlessness is crime. Intemperance is making shipwreck of the happiness, corrupting the morals, and destroying the souls of your fellow-creatures by millions; and, if not arrested, the destroying flood will roll on to future generations. A remedy is now proposed to arrest the march of the destroyer; and to refuse to weigh and examine its claims, is to incur guilt in the sight of Heaven. By all the ties of country; by all the claims of humanity; by the spirit, and the commands of the holy and benevolent religion of Christ; you are called upon to *examine* and *inquire*.

“What are you doing, now-a-days, my good fellow?”  
 “Oh! I’m attending to the drama.” “To the drama—ah! I thought so. Your nose shews it.”