

ing it, when we witness daily on your part such noble acts of magnanimity, of faith, and love. No, you are not willing, and the only justifiable reason that can be assigned for your unwillingness is, that you are not yet fully persuaded in your own minds, that the thing itself is good. Here, then, occurs a very important question—are you in a state of *willingness to be persuaded*? Are you making it a subject of prayer, that, if really your duty, you may see that it is so? Are you doing this, or are you putting the thought far from you, as not worthy to be entertained by one whose office is to instruct, admonish, and exhort; but not to exemplify a personal instance of self-denial, practised entirely upon the strength of that love which sent a Saviour into the world, and which remains to be the surest test by which his disciples are known on earth.

But in addition to the ministers, and other direct advocates of religious truth, there is a vast proportion of the respectable part of the community who care for none of these things; yet whose influence, if thrown into the scale of temperance, instead of accumulating, as it does at present, on the opposite side, would at once afford the most decided and efficient help to those who are now sorely tempted, wavering, and about to fall. If, for instance, in any of our large towns, men of importance and wealth—men who take a leading part both in business and society—men who originate and forward great public measures, and who, at the same time, enjoy the sociability of rational and agreeable amusements—if such men would, in any considerable number, give their names and their advocacy to the temperance cause, they would raise at once a glorious banner of encouragement and of hope, under whose protection the tempted and weak of all classes, but more especially young men, who are most frequently assailed by this insidious and malignant enemy, would bind themselves, by hundreds and by thousands, to abstain. It would then be no stigma either to youth or age. It would cease to be either singular or disgraceful; and he, over whom his mother's heart was yearning—with whom his father had pleaded in vain, would then be able to pass over to the side of safety, without any other individual knowing that he had ever been otherwise than safe.

And how many parents at this very time would give the whole of their worldly possessions to purchase the protection and attractiveness of such a society for their sons! But let me ask them a serious question. Fathers! have you come forward and signed your names by way of laying the first stone in this great bulwark to preserve your family, and your country? Mothers! I dare not ask of you. Let shame and confusion cover us, that we should have seen all that is transpiring more or less remotely in connection with every British home, that we should have marked the growing curse upon our own household hearth, and yet should have so long refused to deny ourselves the tempting draught, which we knew was one of death to those we loved. Yes, I must ask of you, kind-hearted mothers of England, why in this instance you are guilty of a cruelty so great? Would you not strip from your delicate limbs the garment of pride to clothe that beloved one? Would you not share with him your last morsel of bread, even if it left you famishing? Would you not give him the draught of water brought to cool your burning fever? And will you—can you—dare you persist in a system of self-indulgence, which, though innocent to you, may endanger both his temporal and eternal happiness?

I repeat, there must be some powerful cause which such individuals do not tell, operating in such cases against their acting a more decided and a more generous part. There must be some cause. Can it be their own love of the indulgence? If so, it is high time it was given up, for their safety, as well as for that of others. Indeed it is chiefly in cases like these, that we are made to see the entire reasonableness of the system of total abstinence; for if the indul-

gence be easily resigned, a very slight consideration of the subject in connection with our duty to others, will be sufficient to induce us to give it up. While, if it be difficult to resign, it becomes clear that we are ourselves in danger, and our motives for self-denial are thus increased a hundred fold.

So far as I have been able to discover in mixing with society, one of the most openly avowed and most frequent objections to joining the ranks of total abstinence, is that already alluded to, a regard for personal health, originating in the mistaken but popular belief, that such stimulants are necessary for its preservation. It is, however, a curious fact, that persons who argue in this manner as regards themselves, are invariably such as suffer from some malady, either real or imaginary, and sometimes from an accumulation of maladies, which they still persist in asserting that they use stimulating beverages for the sole purpose of preventing. Now, if such persons drank wine, or beer, or spirits, or all three, and at the same time were in perfect health, I confess they would be formidable enemies to the temperance cause; but with them it is always "*my*" gout, "*my*" rheumatism, "*my*" want of digestion, or "*my*" general debility, on account of which this potent medicine is taken, but which, by their own showing, it has hitherto proved wholly insufficient to remove.

Without entering generally upon the question of health, a question which has been circumstantially examined by judges more able than myself, and in relation to which many important and interesting facts are now laid before the public, tending clearly to prove, that, instead of suffering from total abstinence, most persons by whom it has been fairly tried, have experienced not only no injury to their health, but considerable benefit; I may, perhaps, be allowed to add a few words on the subject of my own experience, which may possibly derive additional weight from the circumstance of my having been, for many years of my life, an obstinate disbeliever in the efficacy of temperance principles to effect any lasting or extensive good; while of all respectable societies, that for the promotion of total abstinence—that which I now esteem it an honour and a privilege to advocate, would have been most repulsive to my feelings to join. Indeed, such was my contempt for the system altogether, that I often pronounced it to be a mockery of common sense, and at the same time frequently asserted my belief, that nothing could be more likely than the restraint of a public pledge to create an immediate inclination to break it.

For two years—years I may say of total ignorance on this point, during which I took no pains to make myself better informed—I treated the subject with the utmost contempt whenever it was brought under my notice. By degrees, however, it began to wear a different aspect before the world in general, and facts were too powerful in its favour to be disputed. By degrees it began also to assume with me somewhat more of a personal character. I could not see how I was right while indulging in what was so fearfully destructive to others, and to some whom I had known and loved. Yet such was the force of habit; such my willingness to believe what doctors told me, that wine was necessary to my health, at that time far from good; and such, also, was my dependence upon stimulants, for increasing the strength of which I often felt miserably in want, that three years more elapsed before I had the resolution to free myself practically, entirely, and I now trust, forever, from the slavery of this dangerous habit.

Four years of total abstinence from everything of an intoxicating nature, it has now been my happy lot to experience; and if the improvement in my health and spirits, and the increase of my strength, during that time, be any proof in favour of the practice, I am one of those who ought especially to thank God for the present, and take courage for the future.