

an enemy, frustrated every attempt, made before Father Matthew's time, to make the Irish people embrace the cause of temperance. The rapidity, however, with which it subsequently seized upon the mind of the nation, shows that it required nothing but a leader in whom the people could and would place confidence to render its progress lastingly successful. Such a leader did arise, and by a simple, earnest, energetic appeal to the hearts and minds of his countrymen, accomplished one of the most remarkable events of the nineteenth century. Enthusiasm, however, will not sustain a cause, if there be nothing else to support it. Vicious habits are not easily eradicated. Unfortunately, they sometimes triumph over reason, interest, and opinion—there is no cause that will not be embraced and abandoned by persons of unsettled convictions and weak morality, but like stragglers on the rear of an army, they serve rather to impede than promote the cause they have embraced, and by flying away upon the first symptom of defection, throw an air of ridicule upon the firm and manly veterans who would die before they abandoned their colours.

Men are beginning to appreciate the cause of temperance, not because its most numerous adherents happen to belong to this or that country, though this consideration will never cease to lose all its influence, but because reason and experience have convinced them that it is intimately connected with their interests, religious, social, and political. Total abstinence from intoxicating drinks is not a dogma of religion to which we are all bound to subscribe. It is a problem whose truth must be tested in the agitation of public opinion—and such opinion to be efficacious must be imminently true. I cannot subscribe to the fanaticism which would proscribe and anathematize those who differ with me in opinion, but I would sift their arguments and allow my own to be brought to the touchstone of reason. Ireland has the high honor of making the temperance movement a peculiarly national movement. We are proud of this. The vast numbers of our countrymen and their descendants who have sought discipleship under Father Matthew, leave little room to doubt that their religious and national feelings had been embarked in the cause. This was quite natural. A great movement commencing upon our own soil will, in all its successive developments, retain the hue of the country which gave it birth, and though we may approve of it for its own sake, and admire its intrinsic worth, the memory of our religion, our country and our countrymen cannot fail to influence and sustain our admiration. But as I hinted in the beginning of this discourse, the cause of tempe-

rance must eventually depend upon its own unaided truthfulness and excellence.

When I last delivered a lecture in this room I took a brief view of the social and political consequences of the great moral movement of our times, I endeavoured to show by some examples, that liberty and the power to defend it, were always within the reach of a sober people, and that slavery and degradation were usually allied with drunkenness. I will endeavour to lay before you this evening a few of the more popular arguments in favor of temperance derived from its intrinsic value. I do not presume that I will be able to make many converts to the cause, but the few reasons I may adduce will, I trust, convince those who are already teetotallers, that they may well congratulate themselves upon having chosen a part, which reason, experience, and their own interests shall and must approve.

I believe it is generally admitted that ardent spirits or alcohol properly called, were not known until discovered by an alchemist in the 13th century. It is quite certain that during many ages of the world their use was not known among men. If we find that immoderate indulgence lessens the averaged period of human life, if we find that even the moderate use of spirits or other intoxicating drinks does not contribute to prolong it, I think it would not be too much to conclude that teetotallers are safer than those who combat their principles. If on the one hand there is security, and danger, or, to say the least of it, inutility on the other, no reasonable man will regret that he has made a choice so consonant with common sense and sound reason.

If there be any question upon which medical men have pronounced authoritatively, it is that of temperance. Those who have devoted long lives to the study and economy of the human system, and who have had the best means of knowing what is either useful or injurious to it, are the best judges of the manner in which it ought to be treated. Now if we find these men almost unanimously declare that ardent spirits are hurtful to the system—it is a strong presumptive argument, that in abandoning them we are consulting for our best interests. Alcohol was at one time confined to the druggist's shop,—it was used occasionally as a stimulant. Unfortunately its dispensation was not always to be left in the hands of science, and if the world has many calamities to deplore, think the consequences of its use are among the very greatest.

It has never yet been proved that ardent spirits contain any nutritive properties. They may arouse the indolent into momentary activity, but such activity is ever followed by mental and bodily languor. Unnatural stimulants are always accompanied