

*THE INFLUENCE OF THE DRINKING CUSTOMS
UPON THE WORK OF THE CHRISTIAN
CHURCH.¹*

THE great purpose for which we have met together is to look at our national intemperance—to ascertain its causes, and seek after a remedy. We cannot go far with these inquiries, without discovering that among the many causes that exist, not one can for a moment be compared to the drinking customs of society. They have been called the parents of intemperance, and it would be easy to show that they well deserve the name.

"Custom," it is said, "is the law of fools." I fear, however, that its dominion extends to many to whom that term will not apply. Bishop Potter has said that it is the most absolute, and powerful, of monarchs; and it certainly is, for it reaches everything belonging to us. It tells us where we shall live, what we shall wear, and what we shall eat, drink, and avoid; while rebellion is visited with summary, and most severe, punishment.

It is a tyrant everywhere; but nowhere is its tyranny more injuriously employed than in connection with strong drink. It was a master-stroke of policy on the part of the enemy of souls, to persuade the Saxon race to select drink as the symbol of everything generous and good. Alas! for us, his success has been most complete. Professor Miller says

¹ A Paper read at a Ministerial Conference held in the Free Trade Hall, Manchester.