

Ch. Wood



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The Balance.

At a school, in the village of E.L., in 1849, there were three well-grown boys. Their teacher seeing them often talking to each other in the school, and often engaged in earnest discussion when out of it, became anxious to know what it was about.— Calling up one of them, he asked, 'Why they three were so often laying their heads together, and talking so much?' The boy was unwilling to answer; but the master insisted, and found that the talk was about teetotalism. One of them was a zealous abstainer. One was as zealous an opponent of abstinence. The other had not made up his mind on the subject.

The teacher being himself an abstainer, was at once interested in the matter, and said that he would like to hear how the debaters got on; and to give them time to prepare, it was arranged that they should meet in the school, on the evening of that day-week. The four met accordingly; and the discussion began, and was continued for nearly three hours.— The master being asked to decide between the debaters, said, that they had both acquitted themselves well;

but; instead of giving a decision at the time, that he would put the substance of the debate in writing, and give each of them a copy; and then let them read and decide for themselves. This summing up of the debate he called *The Balance*. And here it is, as follows;—

Intemperance is the great evil of our country, and the question is, *how are we to get quit of this evil?* Let abstinence be adopted, and intemperance will cease. Let drinking go on as it has done, and drunkenness will continue to the world's end. Surely it is more than time that the awful evil were stayed; Who can think of its continuance without horror?— Away with the drinking, and the drinks and the drunkenness will away.

But the *aduse* of a thing does not oblige us to its *entire disuse*. This is true in ordinary cases. But, in the present case, the abuse is so awful, the good supposed to be got so small, and the evil so immense, that the total disuse becomes a great moral duty. Compare the good and the evil which intoxicating drinks have done. Measure them. The evil is a mountain