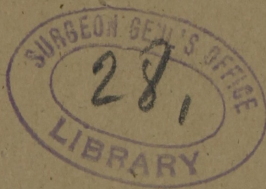


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THOUGHTS
ON THE
TEMPERANCE REFORM.

By W. CHANNING, M. D.



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THOUGHTS

ON THE

ORIGIN, NATURE, PRINCIPLES AND PROSPECTS

OF THE

TEMPERANCE REFORM.

By WALTER CHANNING, M. D.

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TEMPERANCE REFORM.

THE temperance reform began with a few individuals. They were among the thoughtful, well principled and well educated men of the State of Massachusetts. Intemperance was making progress in our country with a rapidity which exceeded even the increase in our population, and men almost despaired of arresting it. The reformers saw that this vast moral evil could only be cured by a moral remedy. Various other means they knew had been thought of and tried. Legal enactments, excise laws, with penalties for their infringement, were among these. Every thing showed how deplorably they had failed. But for every moral evil God has provided one only and sure remedy, a moral one. This most grateful truth was at length seen in all its relations to the great evil of intemperance, and men looked to it with the full confidence which a great natural principle always excites. The foundations of the undertaking were thus made to rest on an original moral truth. Regard was constantly had, in its earliest movements, to the circumstances of the times in which it was begun, but with this always came the deep conviction of its ultimate success. It was foreseen that it must be vast in its extent, and it was further believed that it was to be permanent in its results. If men could be awakened to the great truth that their religious, their moral, and their intellectual nature, was a

possession of incalculable value, and that in the highest cultivation of that nature was their truest felicity, it was foreseen that the reform which promised and secured such cultivation, had in it the sure promise of being alike extensive and permanent. The earliest movers in the temperance reform saw that their undertaking was a *new* one in an important sense. It was *new* in that men of great consideration in the community, solemnly impressed with the ruinous tendency of intemperance, and with its alarming and hitherto unchecked progress, came out as one man to make open declaration of their convictions, and, in a special manner, to separate and to pledge themselves to the greatest of all causes, the cause of reform. There was nothing fanatical or rash in any of their proceedings. They did not set themselves as judges of other men's affairs. It was for themselves, and for the whole human family that they came forward to show how for each and for all, ruin to soul and body, to mind and estate, was by a paramount necessity the consequence of intemperance.

The attempt then to eradicate this vice, was with these individuals a *new* one. This fact is an important one. It is not stated with so much distinctness in order to direct public attention to the first movers in this great cause. They do not ask it, they do not require it. The fact is important because it teaches, what indeed has been again and again taught before, that the distinct apprehension of a great evil, connected, as in these individuals, with as distinct a notion of the means of eradicating it, contains within itself the essential elements of all great and successful enterprises. This fact, in the present instance, also teaches how long the most important truths may remain unknown, or if apprehended at all, in such a way only as to be productive of no small or permanent practical results.

In the fullest sense of its novelty was the undertaking begun. Its first efforts were directed against the *intemperate* use of ardent spirits. The history of the times furnished

instances of their *temperate* use. Perhaps some of the reformers themselves were instances. This use of them was accounted hospitality, and a man might have been thought deficient in this great virtue who did not commonly so use them. The same use extended to the domestic circle, and the dinner and supper table would have been thought wanting in a daily article of drink which did not furnish some form of alcohol. We may now think of this as hardly possible, but it is matter of sober history. It was in view of these facts that the reformers began. And the novelty of their attempt is thus further proved by the history of the times. The wisdom of their plan is easily shown. It is proved by the circumstance that temperate drinking was recognized as no departure from the strictest morality, and in the instances of all those who confined themselves to the strictest temperance it was no such departure. They understood the rule exactly, and dreamed as little of its violation in their own cases, as do those who now totally abstain, of violating the pledge under the sanction of which they daily and hourly practise this total abstinence.

Was it not wise that no more was attempted in the times we speak of? Has the reform been checked for a day in its onward progress by this distinct reference by the reformers to the circumstances of their times? I answer that it has not. The earliest movements were necessarily slow. Men looked with doubts about the results of the enterprise, and some men with suspicion about the motives of the reformers. There was occasion found in this extraordinary movement for deliberate argument against the wisdom of the undertaking, and the more powerful weapon, sarcasm, was not forgotten among the means employed to defeat it. But neither the opposing circumstances of the times, nor the direct, nor indirect agencies to obstruct its progress, which the reform gave rise to, have produced this effect. It has gone steadily onward, gaining and diffusing light in its whole career.

At first the undertaking moved slowly, and to some it did

not move at all. Its earliest friends were the habitually temperate. They were deeply convinced of the virtue they practised, for the practice was based on principle. But they were most anxious that what was to them so great a blessing might be equally so to all. They knew the power of example, but they also knew that intemperance removed its victim from the influence of this ordinarily powerful motive. He was to be sought then, and to be addressed directly, touching the danger and ruin that attended him. There was no other way of reaching him. The reformers were thus obliged, by the very circumstances of the case, to come out, and to make the public a friend or a foe to their noble enterprise.

But it was not the circumstances of the intemperate only, or chiefly, that retarded the progress of the reform. The public, though fully aware of the extent of the evil, could hardly be supposed acquainted with the remedy. There was no experience to guide them, and the novelty of the reform had none to furnish. There was very much the same feeling evinced towards it, that has been manifested in every period of human history, on the first promulgation of any great plan which has proposed important changes in the customs of society. It has been the same when some mighty mind has appeared, in advance of its age, and promulgated as most important truths, what, it may be, have never till then been brought distinctly before a community or the world. This has been alike the case with both literature and science; and for ages truths of unspeakable value have been looked upon as the dreams of the visionary, and as entitling their authors rather to reprehension than to fame.

Now there is reason for this, and in many cases it is of great use. It is hardly to be supposed that the discovery which is to unsettle a science will be at once admitted; and the doubt which demands further evidence, is not only a pardonable but wholesome skepticism. So with discoveries in morals. The new principle which is to subvert old and

established practice is never unworthily treated when submitted to unprejudiced investigation. The same is true of literature. We may now be surprised at what seems the insensibility of a former age to some of the mightiest achievements of the human intellect. But it was the misfortune of their authors, if it were one, to have lived in advance of their time. There was light, but the darkness comprehended it not. The mere naked fact, however, that the mind had done so much, had in its very self a promise that there would arise those who would apprehend what had been written, nay more, who would find in the immortal record, inspiration for themselves, and even add new light to what they had received; give to it new directions, and modify it as the changing circumstances of men and times might require.

What has been traced in a few words, is just what has happened in regard to the temperance cause. Men have waited that the experiment might be fairly made, the reform severely tried, before they have felt willing to send in their adhesion. But this very course has made the reform a matter of frequent and serious thought; and as its principles are too true not to be fully admitted when patiently investigated, those who doubted most when they were first presented to them, have become the firmest friends of the reform. The conviction it may be has been slowly produced, but it has derived a fullness and strength from this very fact, which a more sudden conversion might not have secured. This slowness of the early progress of the reform, has been most favorable to the cause. Many and most important changes have been brought about in its progress. There has been a constant reference to what has been already done, in every new step that has been taken, and the cause has been saved in this way from much that might have appeared reasonable prejudice, had any other course been pursued; and it has daily and almost hourly made new friends.

To the careless observer this progress may seem to have been different; and some recent alteration in the measures

of reform, are claimed to have been original, at least independent of what preceded them. For one especially has this character been claimed. The total abstinence principle which has within a few years been introduced, and is now almost universally adopted as fundamental. The pledge is a part of the same measure. These, both of them, have been of vast importance. No true friend of the cause can for a moment question the powerful and successful agency of these principles. They have saved multitudes who were in the sure way to ruin, and thus have kept thousands from entering that fatal path.

Since the universal promulgation of these principles, the cause has gone forward after a manner most extraordinary for its rapidity. A noble foundation had been already laid, and on it the superstructure and crown of the labor rose with a beauty and a grandeur which could not fail to engage the interest and admiration of all the good in every community. These principles were aided in their operation by another very interesting fact, furnished by an anterior period of the reformation. Men were at length so truly satisfied that it was founded in true philanthropy, that they were no longer ashamed to be numbered among its friends. This was a vast step. Nothing is more fatal to any cause, however important it may be, than the ridicule which may incidentally or more directly attach to it. The temperance cause was peculiar for the obstacles it met in this direction. There were embarrassments often, even where open ridicule could hardly be encountered. One does not always like to be at issue with those about him concerning any matter, and especially on a question of doing, or abstaining from doing, that which in one's own individual case may be indifferent, and becomes important only as it may contingently operate as example. Still the case was met with sufficient firmness, but with no ostentation; with no forth-putting of acting upon other or better principles than one's friends. It was an easy and conciliating exercise of

what was felt to be a virtue, so that what was at first strictly voluntary, soon became what all right conduct ought to be in order to be safe, entirely habitual.

We can hardly refrain from commenting distinctly on these interesting facts in the history of the temperance reform. How wisely did it begin? In what beautiful proportions have its various parts been developed? It has had, and the fact is a most important one, a growth in perfect correspondence with all occasions and all demands. It has not gone on too fast. Its progress has been that of all great and permanent institutions. It appealed to the constitution of man's whole nature, both the intellectual and physical, and in never overstepping the modesty of that nature, it has commended itself to every one who could be induced to bestow on it almost the least attention. When once thought on seriously, the thought has remained, it has become deeper and deeper, the father of many and kindred thoughts. Individuals who observe in themselves the progress, the developments, the changes which their minds experience on all important matters about which they will think, have been surprised at the results at which they have arrived, on this great subject, the temperance reform. They are surprised when they look back on the state they were in regarding it, when it was first suggested to them, and compare that truly with their present views. They can hardly believe that they are the same men, who admitted the thought with reluctance, and dismissed it without regret. They now become the active agents in the reform, and occupy themselves about all good and tried means to carry it forward, and at the same time study to discover new ones. How important to this cause that the number of such friends should be daily added to it! Light, information, only are wanted to secure to it the willing co-operation of every good man in every community.

It is proposed in the next place to state at such length as the subject demands what the temperance reform truly is, upon what principles it has proceeded, and what are its claims.

The subject is not without its difficulties. It is not easy for its friends to speak of it without at least the appearance of enthusiasm. This to many always prejudices a cause, however good it may be. It is difficult, very difficult to present truth, obvious truth, in just such an aspect as it shall strike all to whom it is addressed in the same way. This is true where no prevalent prejudice is in its way. Let us however only have such prejudice ready to meet us at all points, and the task of the philanthropist becomes discouraging indeed. He meets with trouble on all hands. There may be cool friends to his cause, and these may have more or less influence. These shake the head, and lift the hand, with that eloquence of action which moves more than words, and then wonder that so much mistake and error are mingled even with the truly good of human striving. They have not found a perfect scheme in the necessarily imperfect system, and this is good cause for shutting their eyes on all, about the real value of which they feel no sort of doubt. In the history of the temperance reform, few circumstances have been so discouraging as this. These cool friends, with their minds only occupied about really trivial mistakes in the detail of a vast enterprise, have kept aloof from all active concern in the matter; have done nothing to correct the evil; but in some instances have exerted a most unhappy influence by recounting their disappointments and regrets, and these as often to the disaffected and opposing, as to the true friends of the cause. Such men want light. They should be made to understand that it is not the part of wisdom to look only on the questionable and uncertain, when a blaze of light and of truth surrounds them on all sides. Especially should they be cautioned not to aid the cause of opposition where a vast matter is at issue, nor to argue against a good because it is not wholly and exclusively a good; for what is this but to make war upon the most valuable institutions of man.

Besides this class of indirect opposers or unfruitful friends

of this reform, light is wanted concerning it by a very large class who have in no measure or sense been its friends, who have looked upon it as inexpedient and ill-timed, and as designed to interfere with concerns which are wholly personal to the individuals of every community. In this class are included men of all ranks and conditions. It has wealth, knowledge, benevolence, yes, true philanthropy in its ranks, and claims to be approached with respect and kindness. No friend of the reform would for a moment withhold from them what of both of these they have the power or opportunity to bestow. He honors them truly and deeply for the wide and noble interest they have displayed in most important directions. They feel that they have done so much, so filled the measure of many claims, that it is almost asking too much of them to give a new direction to their beneficence or their influence. But this cause is so great a one that its friends most earnestly ask for it the help, the powerful aid of the class now referred to, and they are certain, if the nature of this reform were developed to them as it should be, that they would be numbered amongst its truest supporters.

What now is this reform, or rather what does it propose to do—what are its principles, and what are its prospects? We have to consider the nature, the true character of the temperance reform, what it has done, and what it is to do.

In the first place, this reform proposes a great and entire change both in the habits of the mind and of the body. Modes of thinking, and modes of acting, the feelings and the principles are all of them so many objects to which it directs its special regard. It recognizes distinctly in every individual of its regard a susceptibility to influence,—that the mind and all its powers, the heart and all its affections, are still possessed, and all of them capable of all their ordinary manifestations and uses. These are indeed obscured, and overlaid, pressed down by a vast weight, but still the power remains. It not only remains, but is always ready to declare itself. It does declare itself, and for periods of different

length, after a manner so unequivocal, and with an energy so effective, that the individual again recognizes it. He even welcomes its return, and mourns over the waste which he has allowed it to experience, and the ruin to it which has impended. He will tell us with fearful eloquence with what unmixed wretchedness he looks back upon his folly and his guilt, and with all this, will acknowledge, with shuddering, his conviction that he wants power to resist temptation, and that he may in an hour be as degraded as he has ever been. He feels that a physical malady has been produced by intemperance, and that a diseased body has been made the abode of his infirm mind. The action of each upon the other has become perfectly reciprocal, and amid such an association he looks with despair for moral courage or moral health. In some individuals, so perverted is the whole moral and physical condition, that alcohol will be sought for as the supreme good, while it is acknowledged by the same men, that it is most disgusting in its taste, and most revolting in its effects. They will commit theft to obtain it, and when every thing else fails, will drink it though mixed with most nauseous drugs, or matters still more disgusting. In some it is in no sense a social habit. They will go away from home or their friends, and pass the day or the week in a state of unbroken drunkenness, and return as squalid and wretched as are the victims of neglected disease. In some of the strongest of these cases, is the conviction deepest of the loathsomeness of the vice, and the consciousness of inability to overcome it.

It is the purpose of this reform to come to such men with sympathy and respect. It has for such a charity that never faileth. The bad habit may have been produced by a neglect of principle, a total heedlessness of conscience. Warning may have been disregarded. The strong claims of kindred and friendship may have been unheeded or treated with contempt; a wilful negligence of all good and kind and wise influence may have been unhesitatingly practised, and

the career of intemperance been madly run. But the times of other and better thoughts which come to all, will happen to such even as these. It is for such times that this reform is ever looking and for ever laboring. These it is which it respects, it is for these it offers its sympathy and its best aids. It is for these it began, and it is for these it has ever labored, and been blessed in its labors. And what more certain success can crown human effort? What higher purpose can any reform propose? Who will not enter into its labors? What valid objection can be made to it? What is this reform? What more than the union of good men of all orders for the single purpose of expressing to whole communities that they are deeply interested in the moral good and happiness of all men? It knows how strong is the power of habit. It sees this in every victim of intemperance. Its sole purpose is to release men from this most oppressive chain. To give freedom to that power of doing good, and being so, which all possess. It is by example it mainly acts, and by this it aims to teach not only how diffusive is excellence, but how universal it may be.

One species of intemperance has been referred to. Another and a much larger one, it is equally the purpose of this reform to meet and to abolish. In this class are comprehended all those in whom the habit is equally confirmed, but in whom the moral sense was never very active, and in whom it has in a good measure become extinct, at least almost wholly inoperative. There may be moments of true feeling in many of this class, but they are rare, and the opportunities for bringing out this feeling, and of giving it useful vigor, do not often occur, nor are they, from the condition of the class, very likely to be suggested. Habit in these has been confirmed by time—by a reckless indulgence—by the power of evil example, by the want of all opposing influences. Perhaps no cases are more unpromising, but even for these much has been done. The means which the reform has employed to accomplish its purposes towards this class are peculiarly

interesting, and deserve distinct notice. I say the reform, for it is to this I most willingly ascribe all and every kind of effort which has been made, no matter what has been its distinctive character, for the suppression of intemperance.

To meet this class of cases, the friends of the reform have adopted such measures as have prevented—made it impossible for the intemperate to obtain alcohol in any of its forms. This has been done in many villages, nay, in many large towns in this commonwealth, and so effectually, that the entire traffic in ardent spirits has, by a simultaneous movement, been abolished. The extent of this has been truly extraordinary, hardly to be credited. Not only have the temperate in such places come forward in the promotion of this great measure, but the grocers, the taverners, and victuallers, have lent their most important and deservedly honored aid. And I can add to all this, which is most important of all, drunkards themselves, as if incapable of resisting so mighty a power of truth and good,—or rather, in obedience to the moral power in their own nature, have yielded their willing assent to the same measures, and pledged themselves to abstain. How easy now has the sacrifice been. They could not obtain ardent spirits. The day, the week, and the month, have passed by without the indulgence. They have ceased to desire it. The habit of temperance, of total abstinence, has taken the place of habitual intemperance, and its new friends have waked as from a dream, to the sense of self-respect, of their honest claim to the kindred respect of all the wise and the good around them. They have been sustained in their new position by every thing, by the easy opportunity of acting well, and the silent but sure encouragement of their whole community. There is nothing of the imaginative in this simple history. I have spoken only the words of truth and soberness. So true has it been that intemperance has wholly ceased in such places, that if by chance a drunkard should be met with in them, it has been at once said, and proved as quickly, that he is a stranger,

a vagrant, from some border town or village, into which the reform has not yet penetrated.

I said, this account of what the reform has proposed for the class of the intemperate now described, and of the means which it has employed to accomplish its purpose towards them, deserved a distinct place in these remarks. No one who gives it the consideration it deserves, will doubt this. The account places beyond question a truth which the reform especially wishes to spread far and wide, viz. the moral power which is possessed by all those who will advocate this cause, and the moral power which remains even to the most intemperate, upon which the reform feels and knows it may act. It is a mistake then, and a very great one too, into which many have fallen, that the reform only or mainly proposes to *prevent* intemperance. It has another, and no less solemn and important ministry. This is to restore to temperance those who have fallen, who are the most fallen. To raise them again to the high places of virtue, of prosperity, and happiness, and to sustain them there by all the direct and indirect influences which a kindred virtue may, and always does exert. Let this be distinctly and universally understood. It is due to the reform that it should be so understood, else half of its purpose is unknown.

These means have been applied in particular places, and where circumstances were so favorable as to secure their success. But for this same class, as well as for the two others enumerated, in places not so circumstanced, large cities for instance, in which the diversities of interest, and difference of feeling have prevented such attempts thus far, various other means have been in steady operation. Such, for example, are public discourses,—debates,—tracts and pamphlets, in almost every variety of form, and number,—personal and direct application to the intemperate themselves; and lastly, and perhaps chiefly, the open, uncompromising example of total abstinence displayed by the friends of the reform every where,—these should all be specially

enumerated as among the means which have been of the most extensive application, and which have resulted in a vast good. Every temperate man, whether so from mere habit, or from strict principle, has been either an indirect, or a direct means, in the daily and constant employment of this reform. He has been part and parcel of that vast moral machinery which has been put into operation in our day; and the momentum which he has alike received and imparted, has, in the truest and highest sense, contributed to its ceaseless activity and wide success.

From the foregoing particulars the nature of the temperance reform may be easily gathered. It is the moral power of a community, or of a nation, distinctly and efficiently directed to a single specific object. Its extent and its dignity are inferences from its nature. So many men have perhaps never before so emphatically enrolled themselves for the accomplishment of any purpose. Certainly so many, and such men, have never appeared as the advocates of a cause in which they personally had less direct interest. They have felt indeed, and very strongly, that interest in it which good men have, and always should have, in every plan for securing a wide good. But this has been the limit of the interest. The dignity of this reform is a like property of its nature. If it call and press into its ranks the wise and good every where, it is felt that the service is a solemn and highly responsible one. This dignity attaches to the reform as an element in its constitution. It is the elevation which of necessity belongs to every purpose of great beneficence, and without ever being referred to as a motive for entering into its labors, or for imbibing its spirit, it gives character to every proper effort which is made for its progress. A man feels sure, that in this cause he is acting from a high motive, and is seeking and laboring to do a great good. He in short becomes identified with the cause itself; a pleasure comes to be attached to his toils, which is their unconscious reward, and a motive for perseverance is for ever present, which

makes exertion most grateful. The nature of this reform is thus truly moral and intellectual. It belongs alike to the mind, and to the heart—the affections and the intellect. It is impossible that it should be selfish, and yet it is felt that it wants no such attribute to secure to it either undiminished activity, or unchecked progress.

We come in the next place to a very important inquiry, viz. the principles upon which the temperance reform has thus far proceeded, and which it regards as fundamental. Some of these have been already involved in the present discussion, and it would not have been easy to speak of its nature without adverting with more or less particularity to them. Thus we have seen that the reform began with *temperance* in the use of ardent spirits, and would seem to have looked to the accomplishment of its true purpose in the *prevention of intemperance*. Next we found a new principle introduced, that of total abstinence. After this came the pledge. It has been shown how successful has been the operation of these principles. They were adopted after a careful investigation of the whole ground; and I shall, in the next place, point out from what considerations they came finally to be fully recognized as fundamental.

It is well known to all those who early attended to the subject, that, originally, a principal reason for temperance was the liability to excess. It was thought that there was no necessary evil involved in moderate drinking—that the body and mind were alike safe from harm while the limit of moderation was strictly observed. Nay more, the opinion was quite general that the vigor of both mind and body was increased by such use, and a man could do more bodily labor, and use his mind to much more advantage when aided by stimulating drinks than by avoiding their use. Now these were settled convictions in the minds of the multitude of men, and they had been acted upon for ages with most lamentable results. It was felt, yes, fully understood and acknowledged, that it would become necessary to increase

the quantity, to exceed the limit of moderation, as the indulgence was the longer practised; but so long as absolute drunkenness was avoided, there was felt to be no need for recommending abstinence. This state of the public opinion, and that too among men not very accessible, the laboring classes, and their employers, presented a serious obstacle to the progress of the reform. Here was personal interest largely engaged on the side, if not of intemperance, of a habit in many, almost a majority, which would end in its most confirmed forms. Here, too, was habit itself on the side of intemperance, for such it was in the great concerns of health and strength, although the individuals might have moral force sufficient to save themselves from open drunkenness.

The reform met this grave case in the only way in which it could be successfully encountered, viz. by direct experiment. The question was not allowed to rest on what the supposed interested reformer might say on the true value of abstinence to all concerned, to the laborer, and to him who employed him. But experiments were instituted on a scale too large to leave any doubt as to the decision; and it was proved, most satisfactorily proved, that ardent spirits did not give strength to the body, or useful vigor to the mind. We have the results of these experiments in the recorded facts obtained from the farmer, the mechanic, the ship-master, the ship-owner, the high departments of the general government, the secretaries of war and of the navy, all, all teaching this great truth, and giving an authority to this reform alike important to itself, and most honorable to those who have furnished it. This single paragraph contains in it a truth of inestimable value. Who can bring it distinctly before him, and think of it in itself, and its wide relations, without giving to the whole subject his most serious consideration, and aiding it with his best powers? The principle has thus been fully established, that the use of ardent spirits is not necessary for either continued or successful labor of any kind.

The establishment of this principle was a great step, not in itself merely, or principally, but in what immediately followed. Was the use of ardent spirits simply and wholly useless? Was there not something else, and more important, connected with their comparatively temperate use? This question could not be directly settled by experiment, as was the first. Observation was appealed to, and this has fully established one highly important principle, viz. that the use of ardent spirits mainly as a refreshment, and to enable a man to continue his labor, is injurious, seriously hurtful to particular organs or parts of the body, and through the injury done to them, hurtful to the whole frame. A very brief, and perfectly intelligible, reference to one or two facts in the physical constitution of man, will suffice to show how ardent spirits are injurious.

What most obviously distinguishes a living form from all other forms of matter, is its motion, its activity, its energy. We are so familiar with all this, that it hardly ever excites even a passing remark. Still it is the great external distinguishing mark of the living being. Let us speak of it as manifested by man. In man action depends on two things, *power* in the instruments of motion, and *will* to direct them in the use of that power. Now perfect health consists in perfect harmony of the instruments, the power, and the will. While this harmony is preserved, the individual may accomplish with ease, nay, with pleasure, as much of labor of any and all kinds, as is consistent with his entire safety. He finds himself disposed to exert his whole powers both of body and mind, as ready instruments to aid him in all his exertions. What is thus true of the actions that are visible, and of which we are in a sense always conscious, is equally true of those internal operations, actions, or functions, as they are sometimes called, on which we depend every moment of our lives for the continuance of our very being. These actions have of course organs which perform them, and these organs have a power on which that performance every

where and every moment depends. All these are alike most healthful when a similar harmony prevails among them, as was stated to be necessary for the fullest health of the organs of motion first referred to.

What now are the effects of the popular forms of alcohol in use upon this living organization? What have been demonstrated to be these effects? Alcohol, in a few words, increases the action at the expense of the power. More may, for a time, be done with their use, but ultimately the power comes to be wasted. At length the instruments themselves become enfeebled; they resist imperfectly the causes which are always operating for their injury and destruction. The instruments at length become altered themselves. They grow disproportionate to each other. Some acquire great size, some are wasted. Some, again, become hard, nay, acquire almost a bony hardness, while others lose their natural firmness, and degenerate into a soft, almost half-organized structure. The blood-vessels are deeply injured, and their proper coat loses the beautiful smoothness and softness, the delicate whiteness of health, and degenerate into yellow, thick, rough tubes; and the blood which they heavily circulate, has lost some of its characteristic properties, and alike wasted in its strength with the whole body, is watery and almost useless. Fat accumulates around the internal organs, and obstructs most important functions, while the whole surface of the body, with the features themselves, suffers in the general deterioration.

This is no exaggerated account of the effects of ardent spirits upon the human frame,—and how melancholy are their effects upon the mind. This too from excessive, and for a time it may be pleasurable excitement, loses much of that which adorns and ennobles it. Depression of its best powers—gloomy discontent—impatience under common trials—open violence—insanity, or self-murder under life's heavier ills—these are among their effects upon the moral and intellectual powers. They produce these by the injury they do

the brain and the nerves—and by the indulgence of morbid thinking to which they surely lead.

Now what is the proof of all this? The establishment of a principle is its truth; belief in it rests on evidence. The proof is at hand. It is the diminished power, manifested by those who habitually use ardent spirits, to resist, or overcome disease, and especially to pass with safety through those surgical operations, and those accidents to which the circumstances in which all are placed, not unfrequently give rise or make necessary. A detail of facts to support this asserted proof, would be here wholly out of place. They are facts, established facts, and settle a principle kindred to and not less important than the one first named, viz. that the use of ardent spirits is not only wholly useless on the score of increasing health and strength, but most injurious, most pernicious both to health and strength. What is of special interest in this connection is the well known fact, that this deleterious agency is exerted by ardent spirits over the animal economy, even when they are not used to the extent of intoxication. The moderate daily use of them is as surely, though it may be more slowly, deleterious; and there are constitutions, and these are not uncommon, in which even a very moderate use will lay the sure foundation for future suffering and disease. A slight injury in such a frame will frequently be followed by destructive inflammation, and an ordinarily mild disease, place life itself in jeopardy.

The temperance reform then, has adopted and acted upon these principles as fundamental, and with the convictions that its friends have of the whole truth of these principles, they would have failed in a most important duty had they not openly and freely declared them.

The principles just noticed are derived from the human physical constitution, and from the known effects of alcohol upon this constitution. Similar and equally important principles are presented by the moral constitution, and by the known effects produced in its manifestations on the character

and conduct, by the use of alcohol. The reform has had little difficulty to convince men that intemperance is fatal to the best exercise of the moral powers, that it hurts, debases these powers, and in its extremest degrees goes nigh to destroy the moral faculty itself. It has ever derived highly important principles of action from these acknowledged facts. These have already come before us, when treating of the nature of the reform. It was there shown how naturally the principle of total abstinence became a part of the system, and how in many cases the doctrine and the practice of the pledge has been eminently useful. These principles have been adopted from a consideration of the claims of the individual to the regard of the reform. It has been to reclaim the intemperate, and to prevent intemperance, because to the individual this vice was so immense an evil.

PROSPECTS OF THE TEMPERANCE REFORM.

This is a subject of great interest. Progress almost of necessity, belongs to some matters of human pursuit, and if in such, progress be not continuously made, this does not necessarily involve a retrograde movement. The pursuit of natural science in all its departments is a striking instance of the truth of our remark. The natural philosopher, is an observer of facts which always remain the same. If he make an experiment the same result may always be looked for with entire certainty provided the circumstances be in all respects the same. Now he can control these circumstances, arrange all the previous details exactly as he has done before. Hence his entire certainty as to the whole result. Suppose now his interest in the pursuit ceases, or that he can no longer command the means for a further prosecution of his inquiries; what he has learnt belongs to the science he has cultivated. It can never be lost to it. A certain point has been gained, and though this may be the limit of knowledge in this particular direction, the knowledge to this point, this limit is settled and permanent. What more

commonly happens in such a case is, that the individual prosecutes his labor, progress is constantly making, and he leaves his toil only when age, infirmity, or death, terminates his individual agency in prosecuting discovery. He has made the whole scientific world the depository of his discoveries, and even while he was most engaged about them, kindred minds have entered into his labors, and have thus pledged themselves to him, and to science, that they will carry them on to complete perfection.

Such is the nature of human inquiry in a most interesting direction. I suppose that in this very case much of the interest is found in the belief of scientific men in the certainty of the laws of nature, that these are fixed, are invariable, and that their knowledge of them is knowledge in the highest sense of the word.

How is it now with discoveries in morals? What assurance has the moralist who attempts a great change in manners or customs, that what he has done will be carried onward—that progress belongs to good, and that when he leaves his great work, there will be those ready who have imbibed his spirit, who will take up his mantle, and pursue his steps? Is the good he has done in any important sense permanent? and if effort in regard to it should cease, will what has been done remain, or will not the tendencies of things be to return to their former state? These questions are grave ones in their present connection. They must be seriously considered, when the leading one is proposed, ‘What are the prospects of the temperance reform?’ And this is the question upon which we now enter.

We may begin our answer to this question by recurring to what has already been done. The past in an important sense belongs to the future. How direct are its connections with the present. What in short is this present, this moment of being, but the result, the sum, whether great or small, good or evil, of all that has been. Not of what has been to us, but to all beings, and all things in all the long past. The

temperance reformer, finds in the present condition of this reform, the sum of all the labor, and all the sacrifice which have been employed in this great cause. He looks at a result of momentous interest, and sees in every direction in which he looks for the causes of all this good, the traces, the deep traces of an intellectual and moral energy, which is without equal when it is considered how vast have been the numbers by whom it has been manifested. As in natural science, he sees that a single purpose has governed every movement, and that to gain and diffuse such light as would promote that single purpose has been the great object with all. He is perpetually called upon for admiration at the success with which this labor has been crowned. It seems hardly credible that so much has been done, when the nature of the evil to be removed, and the simplicity of the means, are placed side by side. The past thus comes to us full of promise, and encourages every friend of the reform to go on with his labors, and holds out a prospect full of brightness and hope.

But with all this encouragement, our retrospects furnish some highly useful lessons in regard to the future. The reform at first, as we have seen, moved slowly. At length it acquired a prodigious momentum, and now it is full of zeal, of wise and commanding energy. It keeps its way amidst a thousand private troubles, and public depressions. The public press every where has taken its part, and thousands of publications are almost daily coming forth in aid of its progress. Eloquent men have brought their peculiar gift into its service—have penetrated into the depths, the sources of human feeling and human action—have awakened the conscience and left impressions too deep to be effaced by time, or lost when that which made them is withdrawn.

Now under the operation of these and many kindred causes, a great deal has been done. This amount of good has been produced too in a *short time*. This is an important fact in its bearings on our present subject. How shall this

good be continued and added to?—to what shall this cause look for its future support, and uninterrupted progress? It must look for both these to that great principle with which we begun, the remedial moral power which has been provided for moral evil. This principle cannot be destroyed, and while it is made, or as far as it becomes a spring of action, that action must be permanent. It is this which lies at the foundation of all the lasting institutions of society. It is this which declares to us the evil of ignorance; and education, or its means, as a remedy, is the natural growth, if I may so say, of its declarations. We feel so sure of the evil here, of ignorance, have so deep an interest in its removal, that we estimate the means by which to remove it, as above price, and cheerfully contribute all of money and of talent within our circumstances. So it is with the temperance reform. It must be universally regarded as it has already become, one of the permanent necessary institutions of society, and so is allied after the closest manner with every other social and domestic means, for the religious, the moral, and the intellectual progress of man. Its interests have been hitherto in some sense felt to be committed to a few—to individuals forming societies for the express purpose of publishing its doctrines, and showing by example its happy effects. It has been by this direct agency of societies, that the reform has made progress, and it must from the nature of things continue for a longer or shorter time to go on in a similar way. Its complete success, its permanent operation, however, must be looked for in the universality of the sentiment, that the personal interest of the individual, and of every individual in this cause, is the paramount concern among men. It must be felt that every man who practises entire abstinence, whether from a fixed principle, or merely from or for example sake, as truly belongs to this cause as if he were formally enrolled among its friends. As this becomes more and more the case, and how rapid is its progress, excitement in regard to the cause will be less. The timid, or the narrow thinker, may find in this,

cause for alarm—he may see, in the quiet of a wide spread sobriety, a decay of principle. But his apprehension will be groundless. The only cause to which we should look as adequate to the destruction of much of the good which has been done, or what is equivalent to this, the checking the progress of the reform, is forgetfulness, or neglect of the great truths on which it so surely depends. Until this takes place, the cause has all the permanency, and certainty of progress, that belongs to physical science. For what truths are more emphatically such than moral truths? Of these we have the sure testimony of our whole moral and intellectual nature. We do not appeal to the senses to confirm them—their proof is ultimate and complete, the stern and solemn convictions of our own minds.

With so much to encourage its friends, the prospects of reform are to be, after all, gathered from the use of the principles which have so much engaged us. They will operate always; but the extent of the operation may be limited, and the progress retarded, by any and all misuse or misapplication of the means. Men are not to be forced into right conduct, either by their fears or their interests. Goodness must be short-lived, and very feebly operative, which comes of such means. It is not by general or municipal regulations that we are to call men from evil habits. We must go deeper than conduct; we must go deeply into that whole moral state whence human action proceeds. In this matter we must not appeal to a majority of men for the measure or the kind of conduct of the smaller number. The majority may be wholly right in their doctrines and practice; but a vote has no charm to infuse either, into those who are wrong in both. Let us teach men where the evil they do lies, what are its sources, and all of them. Let us show every side of virtue, and with what felicity it is blessed. Let it be made to all men a personal concern, to think and act well. Let the moral principle be awakened from its long and profound slumber, and it will be to them in all

its revelations and doings, the fast friend of their happiness, their sure guide to good. By such means, and by such means only, can we secure to this cause the permanency it claims of its friends. And proceeding on its true principles, we must secure to it all of progress that the nature of man allows us to hope for. To pursue an opposite course will be sure to create enemies. We shall find parties rising in this matter, and in this way one of the purest, one of the dearest of causes to the philanthropist, will come to be polluted by low and vulgar passions, presenting themselves in their most odious aspects. Suppose for a moment that it should be mixed up with what are called politics, and great or small questions of a public nature should be made to turn by the power of this reform. Nothing could be so fatal to it. Its great and distinguishing characteristic, its purely moral nature, would be taken away from it. It would itself soon again be lost sight of, in the jarrings and miserable strifes which now make Christianity mourn. The responsibility then, which rests with those who have an active agency in this matter, is not a light one. Making every allowance, however, for human infirmity, if the true principles of the temperance reform be steadily kept in sight, the interruptions to its progress will not be great, and its present bright prospects will be covered by no impenetrable cloud.

