

fully convinced that the drink was the greatest curative
saw and felt that night would have sufficed to decide my conduct ever

TEMPERANCE AND THE FRANCHISE.

THERE are few if any questions of social reform on which temperance has not a most important bearing. Two of these have been prominently before the public lately. The one is house accommodation for working men; the other is the lowering of the franchise. Lord Shaftesbury's bill to moderate the evils resulting from the destruction of cottages by railway extension in London, has brought the first of these subjects before the attention of the House of Lords; and the excitement of an approaching general election has brought the other question to the surface of public discussion. We sympathise deeply with Lord Shaftesbury's case for his poor clients, driven by the remorseless march of public improvements from house and home; and we yield to none in our anxiety to see every Englishman in the possession of all trusts and rights which he knows how to use well. But the man who strives to banish intoxicants from the tables of his neighbours, does more to secure suitable homes for them than legislation can ever do, and is doing not less to enfranchise his fellow-citizens than those who are publicly advocating the cause of reform.

Why is it that so many men find it difficult to obtain proper houses for themselves and their families? Doubtless a temporary and pressing difficulty is occasioned by the destruction of many scores of houses in the city of London to make way for railway embankments. But a deeper and more constant reason is, that working men do not pay such a rent as renders cottage building thoroughly remunerative. Of course, therefore, large numbers of them are compelled to live in decayed mansions, let out as tenements to many families, or in old rickety cottages, where health can no more flourish than can decency. And, even in newer towns like Manchester, where cottages are more plentiful, men still for the most part occupy houses by far too small for the number of the family, and besides, feel themselves compelled to crowd their rooms still further by the entertainment of lodgers. Men pay too little rent, and, therefore, do not command sufficiently good houses.

This wars against health. A grown man breathes about 150 cubic feet of air per hour, during his sleep—*i.e.*, he would need, if no air got in and none got out, a room about twelve feet square and about eight feet high, in order that he might have a sufficient supply of air for eight hours' sleep. Now, generally speaking,

these rooms are not well ventilated, for the windows are tightly shut, and a bag of straw is stuffed up the chimney; and yet four or even six persons occupy a room not larger than the above during a whole night. What wonder that they all rise in the morning with a clammy tongue and aching head, and feel weary and oppressed till they have had their cup of coffee, or glass of "twopenny." Men poison themselves and their children every night, and then wonder that they don't feel "spry" and active during the day!

This wars against decency. Where two rooms are made to accommodate a family of five or six children, and perhaps a couple of lodgers, it is simply impossible to preserve the modesty of either males or females. A vast per centage of the worst form of social evil arises naturally from the fact that children and youths of both sexes are herded together almost indiscriminately. The parents take this certain course to demoralise their children; nothing less than a miracle could prevent its success.

All this leads to the conclusion that men of the working classes should have better houses; with more rooms, that decency may be preserved; with larger rooms, that health may not be sacrificed. But the inflexible law of supply and demand says that better houses can only be secured by the payment of more rent; for, with some few exceptions, men will not incur commercial loss for philanthropic reasons. How then is the extra rent to be saved? Not from clothes. The young women may waste money sometimes on Whitsuntide finery; but, for the most part, working people in England do not dress extravagantly. It cannot be saved from food. Many working-class families spend their money unwisely—feasting two days of the week, at the price of starving for the other five. But, generally speaking, improvement is possible, only in the mode, not in the amount, of expenditure for food. It cannot be saved even from tobacco; for, though an unnecessary expense, this seldom costs the workman a shilling a week. The great extravagance of the working man is beer-drinking. Few "moderate" drinkers and no drunkard spends less than the whole amount of his rent at the public-house. If a man has only a pint per day he spends 1s. 2d. per week. If he has his pint he can hardly deny his wife the same indulgence, Saturday and extra occasions involve addition drinking; and so, without any help from their adult children, they get through 3s. 6d. per week in this one article. But very few men indeed limit themselves to this amount. A workman's wife said to me the other day, Ah! sir, 18s. per week and teetotalism would be better for us than 24s. and the beer-drinking." I question whether 4s. would be more than the average weekly expenditure of those families in which beer is ordinarily used as a beverage. Hundreds of workmen are spending 2s. 6d. per week on rent, and 5s. or upwards on beer; and there are dozens of skilled workmen who are receiving from 30s. to £2 as weekly wages, who are content to live in a cellar, which does not cost them 2s. a week for rent.

Now, any man in a borough, who occupies a house with £10 rental, and pays his own rates, has a vote for his Parliamentary representative. If he calculates about a fifth of his rent for rates he will generally cover that expenditure; so that an annual payment of £12 for rent and rates will entitle him to a vote. That is, he must pay about 4s. 8d. per week, and he will become possessed of the franchise. Any man who pays half a crown for rent, by giving up his beer can afford to pay 4s. 8d. for a better house. By so doing he will occupy a more respectable position; he will see his children growing up vigorous and fresh, and with their beautiful bloom of modesty unsoiled; and, in addition, he would become possessed of that object of every Englishman's legitimate ambition—a part in the government of his country. A reform bill may or may not be necessary: this journal expresses no merely political opinions; but the practice of temperance would be the grandest of all reform bills, and passed by the people themselves.

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