

President's Message



Dear Friends,

A whole month since the August number of the "White Ribbon" came into our hands, it behoves us to consider whether we have "entered" the doors which have opened before us during the month. True, it sometimes takes quite a while to make many steps inside, but we are only expected to make one step at a time.

We cannot afford to be discouraged because we seem to be making slow progress. Many to whom our Lord talked and preached were a long time before they allowed themselves to benefit by His teaching; He continued His work doing for them all that could be done by love and singleness of purpose.

If "our manner of life is to be worthy of the gospel of Christ" we MUST banish the use of beverage alcohol. This is a big task; so was the abolition of the slave trade. People, intelligent people too, except for their inability to realise that those who fought for freedom for their fellow men and women were fighting in a just cause, said "impossible," it can't be done! The slaves are happier as they are; the use of slaves dates back so far that you cannot alter it, etc. Just exactly what the upholders of the liquor trade are saying today: "The trade has been so long established; there will always be some who will drink too much; you will never get rid of it," etc. Those people forget that WE also are fighting in a just cause. Therefore, just as surely as day follows night, our victory is on its way.

Let us pray as we have never prayed before, go out and work as we have never worked before. Victory must not be delayed because of our tardiness.

"Thou art coming to a King,
Large petitions with thee bring."

C. E. KIRK,
Dominion President.

Great Evangelists and Temperance

By VICTORIA GRIGG, M.A.

No. 2

DR. LYMAN BEECHER

From early days in the colonisation of America ships brought abundance of liquor to the new country; and sometimes drink was the chief feature of the cargoes. During the struggle for the War of Independence, however, the foreign trade of the American Colonies was almost entirely cut off. This stopped the supply of the material for rum from the West Indies, as well as imports of wine from Spain. The result was the establishment of distilleries all over the land. We find them a similar situation to our food problems of today. The waste of grain resulting from so much distilling at the time threatened to cause famine; and, at the same time, over-indulgence in liquor was widespread, and was denounced already by George Washington.

Protests came from Methodists and Quakers. We find a Quaker, Anthony Benezet, publishing a pamphlet in 1774 entitled **"The Mighty Destroyed Displayed, In Some Account of the Dreadful Havoc made by the Mistaken Use, as well as the Abuse, of Distilled Spirituous Liquors."**

A great doctor, who set a pattern for medical men today, took up the challenge eleven years after Benezet's pamphlet. He was Dr. Benjamin Rush, an earnest Christian, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, who published in 1785 his famous essay on "The Effects of Ardent Spirits on the Human Mind and Body."

His great learning, stainless character and unfaltering words commanded the attention of the best thought of the day, the pamphlet being printed in newspapers and magazines in America and England, and also constantly reprinted for thirty years. He had been Surgeon-general for the Navy of Pennsylvania, and later Physician-general of the entire Continental forces; and as such his words carried great weight with the general public. In 1788 he published an address to Ministers of the Gospel on "Morals." In this he set out "The mischievous effects of spirituous liquors," and vigorously called on the clergy to "preach against, not the abuse of them, but their use altogether," except in sickness; when, he said, "they are better applied to the outside of the body than the inside." He personally contacted the Methodists, Catholics, Presbyterians, and other Church bodies. As late as 1811 we find him as energetic as ever in the fight. What a lot the Temperance Cause owes to this great medical man of God.

Elisha Succeeds Elijah

The mantle of this great Elijah fell on a most worthy Elisha, who acknowledged his indebtedness to Dr. Rush. He was Dr. Lyman Beecher. In dramatic words which bring thoughts of the prophet Jeremiah to us he tells the story of his espousal of the Temperance Cause.

"There were some Indians in my parish of the Montauk tribe, though not belonging to my congregation. . . . My spirit was greatly stirred by the treatment of the Indians by some unprincipled persons, especially their selling them rum. There was a grog-seller in our neighbourhood who drank himself and corrupted others. He would go down with his barrel of whisky to the Indians and get them tipsy and bring them in debt: he would get all their corn and bring it back in his wagon; in fact, he stripped them. Then in winter, they must go twenty miles to buy their own corn; and pack it home on their own shoulders, or starve. Oh, it was horrible. It burned and burned in my mind: and I swore a deep oath to God that it should not be so. . . . I talked to my deacons about it, and with my people, and raised public feeling. I read Rush on intemperance; and the 'Christian Observer' contained accounts of efforts in London to repress immorality, drunkenness and Sabbath-breaking. All this fermented in my mind, and while I was in East Hampton, I blocked out and preached a sermon that I afterwards re-wrote and published in the 'Reformation of Morals'."

This was the beginning of the work of Dr. Lyman Beecher. His six sermons on Intemperance were published in 1827, and ran through five editions in twelve months. They succeeded Dr. Rush's pamphlets as the standard Temperance publications of the times. Other Temperance preachers came to the fore; and through their efforts Temperance organisations of all kinds were promoted. I wish I had space to say more of these great pioneers of Temperance.

Dr. Lyman Beecher was not only a great preacher, but a great father, who inspired his family to take up the causes so dear to his heart—the fight against drink and slavery. It was to Dr. Beecher's daughter, Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, that Abraham Lincoln said, concerning the Civil War, "Are you the little woman who caused this great war?" It was to Dr. Beecher's son, Henry Ward Beecher, that Abraham Lincoln came one night in

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