

Great Evangelists and Temperance

By Victoria Grigg

VIII.—DWIGHT L. MOODY

No evangelist of the nineteenth century is better known by name than D. L. Moody. Two great international organisations owed much to him—the Y.M.C.A. and the Student Christian Movement. Like the other great evangelists of whom I have already written, in addition to being a powerful pleader for souls, he was a great Temperance reformer, full of sympathy for drink's victims, and full of ardour for their reclamation.

He was born in 1837 at Northfield, Massachusetts, the sixth of nine children, of whom twins were born a month after their father's death. As his mother was left penniless, his early life was spent in conditions of very real poverty, but he was fortunate in that his mother was one who put her trust in Him Who promised to be a Father to the fatherless.

It was the earnest solicitude of his Sunday School teacher which led him to accept Christ as His Saviour, and from that time, he sought to witness for God, and to serve Him faithfully. At the age of nineteen he left Boston for Chicago, and lost no time in attaching himself to a Congregational Church. He set out at once to bring boys and girls from the streets to Sunday School, and the very first Sunday he brought 18 young people, dirty and unkempt, some even barefoot, to form his first class. In visiting these children he was led into some of the worst streets of the city, where public houses abounded, but nevertheless he recruited large numbers. On the north side of the city where crime and vice were rampant, he started work in a disused public house. He literally followed out Christ's command to "go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in."

His work among the poor and wretched made him a thorough-going abstainer. He realised the immense obstacle drink was to the acceptance and progress of Christianity. He became a stern, uncompromising opponent of drinking habits and the liquor trade, and he begged Christians to fight their utmost against this curse. "It is a hellish traffic," he said, "taking many thousands to an untimely grave." The converts at his missions were urged to become teetotallers.

In his early twenties he was faced with making a great decision. His early mission work was all done in his spare time, and before him were great possibilities for becoming a rich and successful business man. On the other hand, he felt he could devote his whole life to evangelistic work. With the example of George Muller before him, he chose to become a full-time evangelist, relying solely on God for his support.

It is interesting to us as "White Ribboners" that our own Frances

Willard had one of her earliest experiences of public Christian service under D. L. Moody. He influenced such men as Dr. F. B. Meyer, Professor Henry Drummond, and Sir Wilfred Grenfell, in their zeal for the Temperance Cause.

When Moody visited Britain, wonderful scenes were witnessed in the great cities. Dr. Bonner, of Glasgow, wrote, "It is such a time as we have never had before in Scotland. The old Gospel is preached: Christ the Substitute, Christ's blood, Christ's righteousness, and Christ crucified, and the Holy Spirit breathing over the land."

During his second mission at Glasgow, an organised campaign was entered upon for the rescue of drunkards, when it was shown very clearly that the Gospel had lost none of its power to meet the most desperate cases.

A choir of 400 men's voices was formed from those who had been rescued from the gutter. At some of his missions, Moody used the Friday evenings specially for Temperance purposes, and said that few of his meetings touched his heart more than these. Remarkable testimonies were given on these occasions by former drunkards and previous moderate drinkers who were led by Christian motives to become abstainers.

Moody deemed no effort too great to reclaim the drunkards. He prayed for them, sought them, and appealed to them personally and publicly. He truly loved his fellow-men, no matter how brutalised or degraded. He said that the drink-sellers' prosperity spelled fatherless children, took the bread out of the mouths of widows and orphans, caused drunkards to reel along the paths, and degraded sisterhood to walk the streets. In addressing an English audience, he said, "There was another law passed here in the days of Wilberforce, and that was that no slave could breathe under the Union Jack—that slavery was to be swept away. But you have something worse than this in England—the accursed liquor traffic. When will you sweep IT away?"

Moody died in 1899, but his question still awaits a reply. Despite enforced rationing of bread, Britain has allocated 50,000 tons of the 1946 barley crop, and 75,000 tons of the 1947 barley crop to be used in the manufacture of alcoholic drinks. Last year in New Zealand we turned more than a million tons of barley into beer. Meantime, our poultry farmers and pig breeders cannot obtain sufficient grain for their purposes. Worse still, the results of using the grain for such purposes are seen in our police courts and broken homes. Oh God! Give us courage to work still harder to drive this evil from our midst.

MRS. HICKSON WRITES TO HER SISTER

July, 1947.

My Dear Winnie,—

It was nice to get your letter, but I was sorry to hear you had had 'flu. It's not so good any time, but in the winter, specially when it's wet weather, it does make you feel miserable. You just hate getting up when you are getting over it. When you are in bed and simply *can't get up*, well then you can seem to enjoy it a bit; and it seems a pity to be disturbed when you begin to feel better. Lazy—that's how it makes me feel. Oh well, I just hope you will soon be getting over the getting better, because that is worse than the being really sick part.

Well, what do you think about the Royal engagement? I think it's about time we had a bit of excitement over a real happy thing like this seems to be. After so long when our only news seemed to be about the war, and all the things that weren't going to be put right whatever people said, when it was all over, it does give one a bit of a thrill to think of a Royal wedding again.

Our Princess Elizabeth seems just like a happy girl, don't you think so? And her intended looks to be a jolly, up-standing young fellow, too. It seems no time at all since she was born, and here she is getting married. You and I were girls then, do you remember it all? Her mother was so sweet. Did you remember seeing her at Rotorua, and how she joined in the singing of the hymn? She's still lovely-looking, even if she has got a little more of what Lorna called ombongpwang, but we call m-a-s. You know we all get that in time.

We have had a bit of worry at our W.C.T.U. meeting about this liquor advertising business. It seems the Prime Minister says what he did in stopping a lot of advertising was only for during the war, and he had to let everything go back to as it was when the war got over. It's a pity if a thing is so bad that we can't run it in war time, but have to go back to it as soon as we can. He said that if the people wanted it, he would stop it, but they didn't want it. I'm sure I did, but I'm only one, worse luck.

I don't like to see the adverts. appearing here and there again. They give me a bit of a shock when I see them. They must do an awful lot of harm. Our President says we ought to do something about it, but it's hard to know what. One thing she said was that if we got a magazine or paper with some liquor ad. in it, we should mark the place and send it to the office saying we wouldn't take it if they didn't cut that sort of thing out. If enough of us did it, they might take some notice.

It's nice we got the marmalade sugar after all, isn't it? It's a job that looks at one all the same.

With love and be sure to get well soon.

Yours loving sister,

MEG.