

countervailing, or by repealing them altogether—cannot fail to develop the natural resources abroad, and throw a large quantity of inferior land in England out of cultivation.

But some may, perhaps, be disposed to think that all my observations have been based on a false assumption, and that cheapness in such an article as hops is so far from being desirable, that dearth should, on the contrary, as tending to discourage the use of malt liquors, be considered as a boon, no matter from what cause arising. Though, however, it is not for me to advocate the cause of malt liquors, especially before gentlemen, some of whom, I understand, are for placing it under penal proscription, yet as there appears to be at present so little prospect of their views being realized; as no indication of an immediate advent of the teetotal millenium is yet observable; and the great bulk of mankind, insensible to the superior charms of cold water, continue to exhibit an unmistakable predilection for bitter beer; I may be permitted to urge, that as long as the state of opinion continues, it is but fair the public should be permitted to gratify this taste (morbid though it may appear to some) as cheaply as possible, and not be required to waive a right which was successfully vindicated against the entire landlord interest of the United Kingdom, for the benefit of the proprietors of a few favoured localities in Kent and Sussex.

IV.—*The Social and Moral Elevation of our Working Classes.*—By James Haughton, Esq.

[Read 16th March, 1857.]

GENTLEMEN,

THE subject I have chosen for my present paper is one of acknowledged importance; it has engaged the thoughts and the pens of many able men, so that I cannot hope to invest it with much fresh interest, or to bring it under the notice of the Society in any very new or attractive form. But, as it is a subject in which I have long taken a deep interest—which interest has, I doubt not, been equally shared by many of our members, I venture to trespass on your time and attention for the brief period allowed by our rules, in the hope that every effort made in a direction so likely to excite the warm sympathy of reflecting men, will serve to stimulate all the members of the Dublin Statistical Society, to strive to acquire a knowledge of those natural laws which may best enable them intelligently and wisely to promote an object of such national and universal importance as the elevation of the working classes.

It is my conviction that ignorance is the chief cause of the many social and moral evils which interrupt human happiness, and retard the civilization of man. It seems to me that men act pretty generally up to their own ideas of duty. I do not apprehend that

there is any very large amount of diabolical wickedness in the world. Men do wrong because their moral nature is neglected.

“ There is a voice within me,
And 'tis so sweet a voice,
That its soft lisping wins me,
Till tears start in my eyes.

Deep from my soul it springeth,
Like hidden melody ;
And evermore it singeth
This song of songs to me.

This world is full of beauty,
As other worlds above ;
And if we did our duty,
It might be full of love.”

Man, in one respect, is placed in a worse position, so far as regards his conduct in life, than the brute creation. These are guided by an unerring instinct, which seems to need little education to enable them rightly to perform the purposes of their creation. Man's guide is a much higher and nobler faculty, which we call reason. But this faculty needs to be carefully educated; and because this necessary education is neglected, we are continually going astray and wandering out of the road to true happiness. Education of a high order is therefore the first matter to be attended to, if we would elevate ourselves and our working classes. Leave them in ignorance of the laws which govern their being, and they must ever remain at a low point in the social and moral scale.

Much has been attempted, and much has been done during the last fifty years, to improve the condition of our working classes. A deeper interest in their welfare has been manifested by those classes of society whom fortune and other circumstances surrounded with more of the comforts and luxuries of life. A better, a truer education of the wealthy, has taught them to acknowledge a closer tie of consanguinity with the poor; and hence has arisen a desire—a new-born yearning—to raise all to a nearer level, and to a more general possession of the blessings and comforts which civilization ought to bring in her train, but which she has not yet succeeded in placing within the reach—or rather in conferring upon, for they are within their reach—of the toilers of our population, the builders up of all the comforts and luxuries enjoyed by the intellectual and the enlightened minority.

“ Despair not of the better part,
Which lies in human kind,—
A gleam of light still flickereth
In e'en the darkest mind.

Believe me, too, that rugged souls
Beneath their rudeness hide
Much that is beautiful and good,—
We've all our angel side.”

I have, in some of the previous essays which I have offered to our Society, pointed out from our Metropolitan Police returns, and

from the Reports of our Inspectors General of Prisons, the intimate connexion which exists between ignorance and crime, and I now beg to draw your attention to some later statistics which exhibit like results. Crime, and social and moral degradation are in intimate relationship. In the Dublin Metropolitan Police Statistical tables for the year ending 31st December, 1855, I find that the number of persons taken into custody during that year, within the district, for every species of offence, was 35,634; of these, 19,025 could neither read nor write; 15,894 could only read and write imperfectly; 644 could read and write well, and only 71 had received a superior education. Of the entire number, 24,188 were summarily convicted; 10,677 were discharged; and 779 committed for trial; of these, only thirteen could read and write well, and but one had received a superior education.

Let us now take the Report of the Inspectors General of Prisons in Ireland, for the year 1855, and we find it presents very similar results. The number of men and women committed to prison for that period was 48,446; of these,

11,156 could read and write,
 9,556 could read imperfectly,
 3,173 could spell,
 2,347 knew the alphabet.
 22,115 were wholly illiterate,
 99 no registry,

48,446.

As a large proportion of our criminals are drawn from among our labourers and artizans, and from their children, who constitute a great proportion of the whole, these figures indicate to a great extent, the course we must pursue, if we would socially and morally elevate our working classes. We must educate them, or rather, we must strive to awaken such feelings in their souls, as would induce them to seek for the blessings of education for themselves and their children. Our aspirations for their benefit must be turned in that direction. Our prisons are simply the barometers which indicate the upward or downward tendency of our population; for there is but a small minority of our people brought under the lash of the law. The millions are toiling industriously and honestly to obtain a living; but very few of them take that place, socially and morally, which, as intelligent beings, they ought to occupy in the social scale. To remedy this defect should be the constant aim of those who have any light to shed upon the surrounding darkness.

As our prison population alone affords us the measure of education, in the popular sense of the term, arrived at by our people, and as it is fair to assume from those data that improved intellectual powers do guard men against the tendency to commit crime, and thus prevent their social and moral depression, let us now contrast what we are doing to eradicate ignorance with the efforts made in other lands to guard against this evil. I have not before me, or very accessible at present, any documents showing the state

of education in other European countries, but I apprehend it is a generally admitted fact, that education is much more diffused among the populations of many of them than it is with us, and I believe crime is also less prevalent. I can, however, compare, from official papers, what is done in Ireland by the government to extend popular education, with the efforts made for that purpose in the state of Massachusetts, U. S.

The parliamentary grant to our Board of National Education in 1855, was £227,641, and the number of pupils in its schools were 535,905. These figures exhibit a very gratifying state of affairs as compared with former periods, and show the increasing interest which is felt in the education of our people. But when we compare our efforts with the efforts of the citizens of Massachusetts in a like direction, we shall see how far short, indeed, we fall, in our anxiety to provide for the intellectual culture of our people.

In the Thirteenth Annual Report of the Massachusetts Board of Education for the year 1849 (the last Report I have access to at present, but we may presume that later ones are not less suggestive or less instructive), I find that the state fund appropriated for educational purposes then amounted to 876,082 dollars, and provision was made from sales of public lands for increase of that fund to one million of dollars. This money was invested, and produced, at an interest of 5 and 6 per cent. per annum, an income of about 39,000 dollars a year. This income is divided among the different towns in the state in proportion to the number of children in each between four and sixteen years of age, and providing that each town shall have raised by taxation at least one dollar and fifty cents for each person from 4 to 16 years of age of its population. The sums levied by 316 towns in the state which made returns, amounted to over 830,000 dollars; of which amount Boston contributed nearly 233,000; and their population was 737,700. That of the entire state was probably 900,000 dollars.

The sum expended by the people of Massachusetts in securing for themselves the blessings—all the elevating influences—of education, amounts annually to about £185,000 British money.

The population of Ireland by last census was 6,551,970, at least seven times as large as that of Massachusetts; so that if we appropriated as large a sum by the taxation of our people for their education, we should levy over £1,100,000 a year for that purpose. How great the difference may be between that sum and the £227,640 given by Parliament to our National Education Board, with that expended by us on private education, beyond what the people of Massachusetts expend in this way cannot be ascertained; I imagine it is a considerable sum in our favour; but let us make what allowance we may under that head, and there will yet be so heavy a balance against us, as proves that our appreciation of the value of education is much less than theirs.

I have no means of ascertaining the comparative advantages, in a social and moral point of view, of this superior anxiety to secure a universal education, as exhibited in the criminal calendar of each country, but I find the following words in the Tenth Annual Report on Education made to the governor of the state, by that

eminent friend of education, Horace Mann, which shows the value of education in his opinion as a moral agent. Referring to the anxiety of the Pilgrim Fathers on that subject, and to the laws enacted by them in 1642, he says, "Thus were recognized and embodied, in a public statute, the highest principles of political economy and of social well-being—the universal education of children, and the prevention of drones or non-producers among men." And again, "The liberal, the public-spirited, those who see in our public school system the great upholding principle of all our institutions, and the means of advancing the civilization of the race—who see in it both the conservative and the progressive principle of society—will advocate a generous appropriation."

It will be perceived, as far as I have now proceeded, that I think highly of education even in the common acceptation of the term, as a means of elevating the social and moral condition of our people.

I have shown that our criminals are drawn from among the least instructed of our population; which fact tells us plainly that, in contemplating the means of social and moral elevation, we should ever keep steadily in view the necessity of attending to the intellectual improvement of the people.

Hitherto, I have alluded to the value of education in the popular sense of the term, which I take to be a facility of reading, writing, and ciphering, and a competent knowledge of the arts whereby we obtain a livelihood; these attainments, combined with religious instruction from parents and pastors, comprize what is usually understood by the term education.

But there is much more than these essential, before we can secure the "social and moral elevation of our working classes," or of any of the classes of society. Education, in the true and useful sense of the word means, much more than these. I agree in sentiment with the eloquent and excellent Channing, when he says, in his address to the working classes, "I know but one elevation of the human being, and that is elevation of soul. Without this, it matters not where a man stands, or what he possesses; and with it he towers, he is one of God's nobility, no matter what place he holds in the social scale. There is but one elevation for the labourer, and for all other men. The only elevation of a human being consists in the exercise, growth, energy, of the higher principles and powers of the soul. Whoever seeks truth with an earnest mind, no matter when or how, belongs to the school of intellectual men. The more of mind we can carry into toil the better. I am asked, whether I expect the labourer to traverse the whole circle of physical sciences? Certainly not, nor do I expect the merchant, or the lawyer, or the preacher to do it." I might quote largely from this admirable address, and with great advantage, as illustrative of my views, but I must hurry on towards the termination of my paper, as my limited time will not allow me to do more than touch briefly on the many topics which crowd upon my mind while I dwell on this interesting question.

In drawing attention to social and moral evils, with a view to their extirpation, it often seems to me that preachers and writers

speaking too much in general terms, and omit to point out particular evils, and to enforce the necessity of their abandonment by all.

There is one practice almost universal amongst us, which, more than any other evil habit that prevails, impedes the social and moral elevation of our people. It is a habit which does more to degrade men, and keep them low on the ladder of life, than any other, or perhaps than all other bad habits put together, and yet few preachers and few writers condemn it in their teachings or ministrations. It is a habit destructive of comfort and virtue; its injurious effects are patent to all men; and yet all, as if by common consent, avoid all allusion to it, even when they seem most earnest to improve the condition and elevate the character of their fellow men. This habit is the use of alcohol, which alike endangers the peer and peasant, the monarch and her subjects through all grades, down to the poorest wretch who ekes out a miserable existence from the most sordid occupations of humanity. All, all alike, are enveloped in the meshes of this destroyer, who "smiles, and smiles, and murders while he smiles." When I say all, it is of course understood that I except that zealous band of teetotalers who are continually pointing out to men their folly with the voice of unanswerable truth, by the warnings of hoary experience, and from the unerring lights of science.* All of which proclaim in language not to be gainsaid, that alcohol is the undying enemy of man. This being the case, it is clear that we must remove this destroyer out of the way (and this can only be done effectually by legislative prohibition of its manufacture for sale,) before we can hope to succeed in securing the social and moral improvement of our working classes, or even in making any near approach to this desirable consummation of our labours. The wealthy and intelligent are called on, in an especial manner, to relinquish their drinking habits, as the poor and uneducated look up to them for advice, and are guided in their moral habits by their example.

That the physical comforts of the working classes are greatly increased by the lessened consumption of alcoholic liquors, is proved by the fact, that in the years 1809, 1810, 1813, and 1814, which were seasons of apprehended famine in Ireland, and when distillation from grain was prevented, as compared with the years 1811, 1812, 1815 and 1817, which were seasons of abundance, and when distillation was permitted, the imports of the comforts of life into our country, such as haberdashery, drapery, hardware, blankets, cotton goods, tea, and sugar, exhibited an excess of over two millions of pounds sterling in value, in favour of the former periods; showing clearly that the absence of the comforts of life arises solely from our mad and thoughtless expenditure on strong drinks.

No actual deficiency of food for support of our population has ever occurred; more grain being destroyed in our distilleries and

* In February last, the Medical Society of New York, seventy members present, unanimously passed the following resolution:—

"Resolved—That in view of the ravages made upon the morals, health, and prosperity of the people of this state, by the use of alcoholic drinks, it is the opinion of the society that the moral, sanitary, and pecuniary condition of the state would be promoted by the passage of a prohibitory liquor law."

breweries than would amply suffice for the supply of all our wants in our least productive seasons. Dr. Lees, in his admirable Prize Essay on Legislative Prohibition of the Liquor Traffic (of which two editions of eleven thousand each have been sold, and a third of twenty-two thousand is already nearly disposed of), says, in reference to this matter, "This is confirmed by the fact, that in the years of Father Mathew's greatest temperance triumphs in Ireland, while the revenue from whiskey was vastly reduced, the total revenue had increased £90,000 above its average, besides saving much cost in collection."

Without going into minute calculations to exhibit our actual expenditure on alcoholic poisons, I may state that it amounts to many millions of pounds sterling annually; and as this expenditure neither adds to the wealth nor the strength of the nation, but actually diminishes both, it is obvious that one great element in the elevation of our working classes is to be found in the direction of this enormous waste of our resources into healthful channels, which would be continually reproductive of the comforts of life, and would be found no trifling aid in the formation of those habits of self-respect and manly independence, without which no people can be elevated in any true sense of the term.

I have always held that ignorance is the main cause of human error and degradation, and that education must be looked to as the primary means of improvement—as the pioneer of civilization. But some statistics recently collected in England by Dr. Lees warn us against placing our entire hope of amelioration on education, as the term is popularly understood; for it appears by enquiries taken over a wide extent of country, that crime and the consequent degradation of the working classes depend more on the facilities offered for indulgence in drinking habits, than upon any other cause; for it is found that in those counties where there is a larger number of public houses in proportion to population, and in which there is a larger amount of school education also, there is to be found the greatest amount of crime. The moral advantages are largely in favour of those counties in which there are fewer facilities for obtaining strong drink, and in which school education is much less extended. Thus proving that, where the appetite for alcohol is most indulged, it counteracts the advantages of secular education, and even of religious instruction, which is imparted most freely where schools most abound. One hundred and thirty thousand licensed houses in Great Britain, and probably twenty thousand in Ireland, in which the appetite for alcoholic poisons which madden and degrade, is kept alive by legislative sanction, are found too strong a counteractive force against the good influences of education and other benevolent labours of every kind. We must "take the bull by the horns," and banish the evil thing, and thus prove that we are in earnest, or the elevation of our working classes will be the work of future generations. If we lack the virtue, the honour will not be ours. An eminent distiller once said to me, when I pressed on him these opinions, "We will place the folly of mankind against the

wisdom of mankind, and we'll beat your teetotalers ten times over." Herein lies a great truth.

Dispel this folly by the light of education and the right exercise of wisdom, founded on a knowledge of the laws of nature, and we should no more think of using alcohol as a sustainer of health and strength, than we do of using arsenic for such purposes; no more think of flying in the face of common sense, of outraging our physical and moral nature, by pouring intoxicating liquors into our system, than we should now think of thrusting our hands into a fire, and hope to escape with impunity.

All the authorities of learning, of science, and of experience are against the use of alcohol in any quantity, by men in health. It is appetite alone—treacherous appetite—that leads us astray. All who indulge in its use are injured both in body and in mind. The elevation of the working classes is hopeless until they are taught to overcome this fatal propensity, or until the legislature steps in and banishes the temptation. I have dwelt much on this branch of my subject, because I think it of the first importance. No real good can be done until our drinking customs are undermined.

There are many other points to be considered and attended to, if we could secure the object in view. With a short reference to two or three other essential matters, I shall conclude this paper. A good deal of attention has, of late years, been given to an improvement in the habitations of the poor. This is a matter of vital importance; without it, their social and moral elevation is hopeless. Model lodging houses have been erected, and attention thus called to so desirable an object. I entertain a high respect for their projectors, but I doubt that they will ever prove extensively advantageous. The regulations by which they must be governed interfere too much with the freedom of action which is a great charm of life; and they seem to me to be beginning, as it were, at the wrong end, in building comfortable houses for our artizans, before they have learned to appreciate the value of such abodes. Cleanliness, and sufficient accommodation in their houses for the purposes of decency and the needs of a higher civilization, are not yet felt as wants of their nature. It may be alleged, and alleged no doubt with much force, that some effort to create a feeling in their minds in favour of these aids to a higher civilization should be made, and that "model lodging houses" are a good move in that direction. I doubt not that any influence they may exercise will be useful; but what extended beneficial results can we hope for from a few such establishments, erected at considerable cost, and not paying a sufficient rate of interest for the money expended to induce capitalists who deal with the working classes to embark in such speculations, in competition with benevolent parties who are careless of much profit on their investments?

It seems to me that the true course to pursue is to instruct the people by writing and lectures, and in all our schools, on their real interests in this respect; and by legislative enactments to prevent the nuisance of overcrowded houses by a population regardless of

pure air and cleanliness, who spread disease around them, and in other ways bring many evils on the community at large. Many of our labourers, and even of our tradesmen, who are in the receipt of tolerable wages, are quite content to live with their families in a single apartment, which suffices for meals and sleep, and for all their purposes of domestic economy. Even their washing is done there, although the most complete washing and drying establishments have been provided for their accommodation. Our wash-houses on Usher's Island are but little used. Their erection has, so far, proved a failure.

These evils do not arise from want of means; for the well paid tradesman is little more attentive to these decencies of life, than the labourer who only earns one half or one third the wages. We must endeavour to implant the desire for comforts; to persuade the people that their health and their happiness would be largely increased by such alterations in their mode of living. In order to effect this change in the habits of the poor, those in higher position must show a better example than they now do. Sanatory regulations are in the hands of our authorities, and they are sadly neglected. How can we expect the poor to appreciate the virtue of cleanliness in their habitations, while the rich allow themselves to be surrounded by filth and all manner of nastiness in our public thoroughfares, in our more private streets, and in all our lanes and alleys? If we be inattentive to neatness in our own mansions, if our windows be left dirty, and paint is seldom used to give at least an external evidence of our love of cleanliness and order, we cannot expect that the poor will be very particular in these respects. Some legal difficulties, likewise, which stand in the way of the easy transfer of property in lands and houses, need to be removed out of the way. This should be pressed on our government.

These matters should be ever impressed on public attention, as some of the actual and daily necessary duties of life. Their proper performance would tend greatly to elevate our working classes.

The use of tobacco has a deteriorating influence; as it engenders filthy habits, injures the health, and absorbs a large amount of money annually, its use tends greatly to retard the social and moral elevation of our people. It is therefore a practice which should be discouraged by our intelligent classes.

I do not think any great elevation in the social and moral character of our working classes can be secured, until they are taught to exercise economy and the habit of forethought in the management of their affairs. Fire insurance is a means of guarding against distress and misery, which they seldom, I may almost say never, resort to; and life insurance is a provision which but few of them make for their families. In these respects, however, they deserve but little censure from their more intelligent brethren, who are likewise very inattentive to the duty of thus guarding against calamity and making some provision for those who are dependent on them. These are duties which I hold every man is bound, in honesty to his family and in moral responsibility to society, to perform, unless he have, by some other means, laid up a provision

to supply the wants of those who in his lifetime look to him for their support. The performance of this obvious duty while we are in health—and which is now so shamefully neglected by most—would have a magical effect in improving our social condition. But I may not dwell on this topic, important though it be; I wish some member of our Society, competent to do it full justice, would take up the subject, and enforce upon the consciences of all the social and moral wrong they are guilty of by their neglect of their duties in these respects.

I have now indicated some means whereby the social and moral elevation of our working classes may be secured to an extent hitherto unknown among us; and I conclude by the expression of my full belief that all our efforts will prove unavailing unless they are sustained by high principle. The rich must show an example to the poor of manly virtue, of adherence to truth, of an abhorrence of all insincerity, of a strict regard to honour in all the relations of public and private life; of the exercise of that charity which thinketh no evil, if it be possible to think otherwise. Thus feeling and thus acting, they will be instrumental in assisting largely in “the social and moral elevation of our working classes.” I believe these words touch a sympathetic chord in many of your hearts. I hope you will, each one of you, make their spirit one of the ruling principles of your life.

Want of time has caused me to omit any allusion to a branch of my subject, the importance of which must be obvious to you all. I refer to the condition of the wives and daughters of our working classes. A great change in their habits and occupations must be effected, before the great purpose I have brought under your notice can be in any degree realized. Females should not be employed in sordid out-of-doors labour. In cities and towns their duties should consist in household affairs; the men should provide for the pecuniary wants of their families; the women should keep all clean and comfortable within, know how to lay out the income to best advantage, be taught the art of cooking in the best and most economical way, and made generally acquainted with all matters relating to domestic economy.

There is a wide field for improvement before us. Our Society is doing some good work in it; laying the foundation, I trust, of future excellent results.*

* The turn which the discussion on this paper by our members took, induces me to say, in explanation of my views of legislative prohibition of the liquor traffic in these kingdoms, that, in common with all the societies now in being for the accomplishment of that object, I hold that legislation much in advance of public opinion on the question would be injudicious. Our desire is, first to create a strong public opinion in favour of our views, and then to call on Parliament to embody and enforce the general sentiment, as it does under all similar circumstances, by prohibitory enactments, such as have been applied to lotteries, and other kinds of gambling, and to the removal of various other nuisances inimical to the well-being of society. In a word, to carry into effect this just principle of human action, *all practices more injurious than beneficial to society should be given up, or, if need be, prohibited by law.*