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A Dream Prophetic:

OR,

BACCHUS DETHRONED.

A TEMPERANCE POEM.

BY A

WORKING MAN.

“If we subtract from the ignorance, the poverty, the suffering, the sickness, and the crime, which are now witnessed amongst us; the ignorance, the poverty, the sickness, and the crime which are caused by one single, but the most prevalent, habit or vice of drinking needlessly—which destroys the body and mind, and home and family; do we not all feel that this country would be so changed, and changed for the better, that it would be almost impossible for us to know it again.”—*The Right Hon. John Bright, M.P.*

ABERDEEN:

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PUBLISHER'S PREFACE.

BELIEVING that it is the duty of every one to do his part in trying to stem the tumultuous tide of intemperance that is surging over society, bearing, on its billows, degradation and misery, wickedness and woe, involving in its evil consequences, to a greater or less extent, every man, woman, and child in the kingdom ;—the following Poem, from the pen of a “ Working Man,” is offered to the public, in the hope that it will stimulate efforts on the part of all who have the good of their fellow-men at heart. The evils resulting from the drinking customs of society are so great and wide spread, that if they were abolished, the advantages to our country would be incalculable. Let it not be said, that the Author is a day-dreamer, in painting the prosperous condition of our country, after the dethronement of Bacchus has been accomplished, in such fair colours ; or that his ideas are Utopian, and unlikely to be realised. But let all who wish well to the cause of temperance and social prosperity, be earnest and harmonious, in striving for the realisation of this much-to-be-desired object, and long before a hundred years hence, in the words of John Bright, “ this country would be so changed, and changed for the better, that it would be almost impossible for us to know it again.”

A DREAM PROPHEPIC: OR BACCHUS DETHRONED.

WHILE musing alone, in a deep meditation,
And thinking on life, with its snares and temptation,
Its joys, and its sorrows, its hopes, and its fears,
I was launched to the future one hundred years.
I found myself strolling the streets of a town,
An ancient city of fame and renown,
Were it not for its landmarks, which stood as of yore,
I scarce could believe that I knew it before.
Such a change had come o'er it, since last I was there,
It caus'd me in wonder, to gaze, and to stare ;
In street or in terrace, in court or in wynd,
A publican's drink-shop I never could find.
I ask'd an old man of benevolent mein,
" Can this be the city they call Aberdeen ?
For things are so alter'd, I'm puzzled to know,
If these are the streets that I knew long ago.
The people look happy, and healthy, and strong,
I never meet one of the staggering throng,
Of beggars, and vagrants, I see there are none,
And the most of the ' bobbies ' appear to be gone.

Where now are the dens where the liquor was sold ?
 And where are the men so defiant and bold ?
 Who doled out the poison for the sake of its gain,
 And laugh'd at the victims their traffic had slain.
 Has remorse taken hold of their hearts at the last ?
 Have they fled from the trade to atone for the past ?
 And conscience-stricken revolt from pursuing,
 A calling that causes such sorrow and ruin.
 Be the cause what it may, I am eager to know,
 And I fancy that *you* can be able to show
 How it all came to pass ; sure the act would be kind,
 Were you now to consent to enlighten my mind."

Astonished, he cried ! " where on earth have you been ?
 If you know not these things you must surely be green,
 It is now twenty years, on the first of October,
 Since the traffic was stopp'd, and the nation made sober.
 O ! that was a day which shall ne'er be forgot,
 From the end of the land to the famed John O'Groat—
 The people rejoiced, and with hearts unrestrained,
 They sung praises to God for the vict'ry gained.
 At this present day there are thousands alive,
 Who refused to believe that the time would arrive,
 When the strong-holds of drink would be all overthrown,
 And Bacchus, for ever expell'd from his throne.
 But when men are in earnest, and truth on their side,
 With faith in their cause, and their sympathies wide,
 When love is their aim, and their motives are pure,

By the blessing of God, their success must be sure.
 The clergy, who long lookèd on unconcerned,
 At length from enlightened conviction, had learned
 That by fostering habits, oppos'd to their Master,
 They would yet be arraign'd for the nation's disaster.
 Appall'd at the thought, they had rous'd themselves up,
 And at once from their tables they banish'd the "cup,"
 And from pulpit and press, with their voice and their pen,
 They promoted the views of the temperance men.
 And the people were stirr'd, o'er the length of the land,
 With righteous zeal. And with stern command,
 Proclaim'd that no 'tinkering' measures would please,
 That the sale of the poison, for ever must cease.
 The struggle was hard, and the battle was long,
 Our foemen were fierce and their interest strong,
 And like hungry tigers, intent on their prey,
 They madly rush'd on to the front of the fray.
 But the fiat went forth, at high Heaven's command,
 'Remove ye the curse from the midst of the land,'
 And their schemes, and their plans, and their armies combined,
 Were scatter'd like chaff, when it's tossed by the wind.
 You may search throughout Britain in all its domain—
 For a drink-seller's sign, but you search it in vain ;
 Where distilleries stood, is now planted with birches,
 And some are made stances, for schools, and for churches.
 What became of the men ?—did I hear you inquire ?—
 Who dealt in the liquid of death and of fire !

Distillers, and vendors, and big-bellied brewers,
 Are earning their bread, making ditches and sewers.
 At first they were haughty, and hardly to please ;
 They expected to live all their days at their ease,
 But their riches took wings, they were glad of a crust,
 For none would engage them to places of trust.
 A few, it is true, ere the law came in force,
 Adopted a new, and a wonderful course,
 Disgusted, and sick, at the scenes, and the quarrels,
 They smash'd all their bottles, their casks, and their barrels.
 And employed their talents, their means, and their time,
 In proving that drink was the parent of crime,
 And their fervid appeals, and their pictures of woe,
 Assisted to hasten the fiend's overthrow.
 You may see what a blessing is brought by the change,
 No wonder you lookèd so doubtful, and strange ;
 Where strife, and starvation, were wont to be found,
 There, now peace and gladness, and comfort abound.
 The savings banks flourish, the churches are crowded,
 And men growing rich, once in poverty shrouded ;
 In the street where we stand, I could name half-a-score,
 Who have purchas'd the houses they rented before.
 The destruction of grain is finally ended,
 And used for the purpose the Giver intended,
 And the poor have good cause to be pleased with their lot,
 When the big quarter loaf can be bought for a groat.
 It is rumour'd the prison will soon be 'for sale,'

They had none for a week, except Barny Macgrail,
 A wandering wretch, who is harden'd in sin,
 He was found making free with a bottle of gin.
 I will tell you of something more wonderful yet,
 If you walk to the poorhouse, you'll see it 'to let,'
 While twenty years back, it was cramm'd to the door,
 This day, though you count them, you'll scarce find a score.
 And these are now claim'd by their friends and relations,
 Who once were kept poor by their frequent potations,
 And now as they're thriving—to make some amends,
 They have fully resolv'd on maintaining their friends ;
 And certain I am, that the news will be pleasing,
 When I tell you that madness is yearly decreasing,
 The doctors declare that if this is to last,
 The insane will be soon 'mongst the things that are past.
 Then why be surpris'd, that policemen are few,
 When they want their chief work—the incapable crew—
 And if things will improve, till the end of the fall,
 It is thought we can safely dispense with them all.
 All now will admit that the drink was a curse—
 Destructive to souls and to person and purse—
 And express their surprise that such terrible wrong,
 Was permitted to ruin the country so long.
 And the men who were once stigmatised as extreme,—
 And twitted, because they kept aye to one theme,—
 Are honoured, and lauded, in every place,
 And counted the truest, and best of the race.

I was one of that band," my informant exclaimed.

"In the temperance ranks, from my youth I was train'd,
And the peace, and the blessing, the land has enjoyed,
These twenty years past, make my heart overjoyed.
My days are nigh spent, I am waiting the call,
Which sooner or later, must come to us all ;
Farewell now my friend, I have told you my story,
To God give the thanks, and the praise, and the glory."
I clappèd my hands, and I shouted with glee,
Rejoicing, to think that my country was free.
I awoke with the noise, disappointed I ween,
To find that my vision had all been a dream.





