

An earnest appeal to the working-men of England against the use of intoxicating drinks and tobacco / [by a Total Abstainer and No Smoker].

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AN EARNEST APPEAL TO THE
WORKING-MEN OF ENGLAND,
AGAINST THE USE OF
INTOXICATING DRINKS AND TOBACCO.

WORKING-MEN,

I appeal to you as those who think, and I ask you to consider if what I am about to say, does not concern the well-being of yourselves and families. And what am I going to speak about? The habit of drinking and smoking, to which, alas! so many of you are addicted. I join the two together, because the one habit so frequently leads to the other.

You often complain of *low* wages, but before you do that, you had better ask yourselves whether you spend the wages which you *do* get, *as you ought to do*. Now, is it not a fact, that the working-classes of this country spend many millions a year in liquor and tobacco? You cannot deny that; and I ask you, if upon reflection, you can say that they are right in so doing?

Let me ask you in what way many of you live? I know that some of you live in very poor rooms, and have scarcely a decent bed to lie upon at night. I know that the families of many of you are very ill-clothed and badly fed; and that some of you say you cannot pay for the schooling of any of your children. And why? Where does the money go? No wonder you are not better housed, and that your wives and families are not better provided for, since so much of your earnings goes into the pockets of the publican and the tobacconist.

Allow me to ask how much you have got in the savings'-bank? I fear, in many cases, nothing at all. How can a working-man save anything against sickness and old age, if he *will* indulge in the glass and the pipe? Now think a moment. Do you wish to have nothing but the Union before you, if you are out of work, or have become infirm? Surely you do not want to be paupers, and to end your days in a workhouse; then why do you let publicans and tobacconists become rich with *your* money, whilst you yourselves remain so poor?

And what do drinking and smoking do for you? Will you, can you honestly say that they do you good? You cannot. If you *think* that they benefit you, I assure you that you are greatly mistaken. I am certain that they do you harm instead of good.—Believe me, the habit of drinking and smoking injures your health, and weakens rather than strengthens you; so that you are spending so much money in what is positively injurious to you.

Besides, does not this habit take many of you away from your own families of an evening, and bring you into bad company? What kind of people do you find at the public-house? How do they talk? How do they sing? You know. Then why go near them? Is it not better to keep at home?

And now I come to the most important point of all; and I solemnly ask you if the habit of drinking does not very often lead to downright drunkenness? O working men, think of the drunkenness of the land, what a curse it is! How many millions have been ruined by drink! How many have become paupers, lunatics, and criminals by drink! What multitudes have lost their lives through accidents occasioned by drink! How many souls have perished eternally through drink! Consider these things, and then say if drink is to be trifled with.

I know that people talk a great deal about moderation in drinking, but why touch intoxicating liquors at all? To take the intoxicating cup into the hand is to run into temptation; and what countless numbers *have* yielded to the temptation, although they once fancied that *they* would never fall! Alas! how often does the half-pint become a pint, and the pint 2 pints, and so on to complete intoxication! Then surely it is wiser to put this pernicious drink entirely away, and thus escape from a temptation which has proved too strong for so many. It is the *habit* of drinking which is at the root of all the excess in the land, and makes the working-classes so dependent upon others.

Then I say, give it up. Give it up at once. Give it up for ever. Believe me, you want neither the pipe nor the glass. You will be better both in mind and body without either of them. I am not asking you to do what I will not do myself. Years ago I gave up all strong drinks, and find myself the better and stronger for so doing. And as for smoking, I never did smoke. I never spent a farthing in tobacco in my life, and never will. I should be ashamed to waste my money in that way.

But "Oh," some will say, "you want to deprive the labouring classes of their *comforts*." But I answer, by no means. Drinking and smoking are false comforts. They are mockers. They come as friends, but prove themselves enemies, like snakes cherished in the bosom.

We hear how working men have of late years advanced in intelligence, and that consequently, they have become entitled to the elective franchise; and is it possible that they can call the merriment and the excitement, or the drowsiness and the stupefaction always more or less produced by alcoholic drinks and tobacco, "*comforts*"? Alas! that men who have any respect for themselves should want *such* comforts! Do you really mean to say that it is comfortable to be fuddled? Do not poverty, anger, strife, harsh words, swearing and fighting, often arise from drinking? These are not comforts.

Working men, tell me, is there no comfort in having a happy home, a cheerful wife, and a circle of merry children? Is there no comfort in being free from debt? Is there no comfort in knowing that you will never die in a poor-house, and never commit crime when you are not masters of yourselves? Is there no comfort in books, lectures, meetings, music, and social intercourse of an innocent kind? Is there no comfort in the approval of your own consciences? You can only give one answer to these questions.

And let me remind you, that you should not be *selfish* in your comforts. You should look for comforts at your own fire-sides, comforts in which your wives and children can share. I am sure you will have many more comforts *without* the glass and the pipe than with them. If the millions of money now foolishly spent by the labouring classes in spirituous liquors and tobacco, were spent in food of a wholesome and nutritious kind; in paying for better houses, furniture, and clothes; in buying books, and in sending children to school, the comforts of our working men, and of their families, would be greatly increased.

Then, do not let your wives want the common necessities of life; do not let your children grow up dunces; do not let them stay away from the Sunday school for want of shoes to go in; do not stand in your own light and keep yourselves in your present low condition, simply because you *like* your glass and your pipe, and do not mean to give them up.

And remember, man does not live only for himself: he *is* his brother's keeper in a certain sense; and as by drinking and smoking yourselves you lead others to do the same, so by giving up these bad habits you may induce others to give them up. Your example must and will have a great effect either for good or for evil. Look at your children—your rosy, playful children. Will you teach *them* to drink and smoke? Remember they will walk in your steps; and I beseech you not to teach *them* to form habits which may be their utter ruin. Have some regard for these little ones, and let them not have reason to say that it was by following the example of their fathers that they were brought to destruction. Take my advice, and never send a child for liquor to the public-house, never entice a neighbour into one, and never enter one yourselves. It is indeed a dangerous place to go into; and I implore you to keep out of it.

Will any of you say that the troubles of life are great, and that spirituous liquors drive away care? Alas! if *that* be the reason why you drink and smoke, let me tell you that you are only adding sorrow to sorrow, and increasing your troubles ten-fold. *The Gospel* is the remedy for care, and I pray you do not put drink in the place of it. If you turn to God and believe in His Son Jesus Christ, your minds will be relieved of every burden, and you will be brought through all your difficulties. Try this remedy, and show yourselves both men and christians.

As to the mere *pleasure* of drinking and smoking, it is a pleasure which is not worthy of the name, and which too often ends in pain. It is a pleasure which is a snare of the devil, in which the unwary are too easily caught. It is a pleasure which degrades many below the level of the very brutes.

Then, working-men of England, turn away, I most earnestly intreat you, from such tempting, deceitful, destructive pleasures. Turn away by the help of God, from habits which in a moment may put you off your guard, and expose you, if not to death, at least to disgrace and injury. There is mischief in the cup and in the pipe. You know it. You dare not deny it. Then be decided. Be your own friends. Give up degrading pleasures, and seek for such as will raise and refine your minds.

I wish you were all bent upon self-improvement. You ought to try and improve yourselves, and you must begin by exercising self-control. You must control your appetites, and let reason have its proper sway. Again, have you never heard of self-help? Then do not expect others to do everything for you. Resolve by the aid of the Almighty, you *will* help yourselves, and not be kept under the power of the enslaving habits of which I am speaking. Don't be ashamed or afraid to do what is right. Don't mind a little laughter and ridicule, or even a great deal of it. Don't say, I must do as other working men do. If you reflect on the subject, you will be convinced that total abstinence both from strong drinks and tobacco, is the only wise, the only safe, the only christian course.

I have thus addressed you, working-men, as a friend. Do not be offended at my plainness of speech. The subject is one of vast importance. It lies at the foundation of domestic happiness, of success in life, and of our national prosperity, and I therefore commend it to your most serious consideration. I trust the ranks of total abstainers will be daily swelled, until the abominable practices to which I have alluded, are fairly driven out of the land, and England is delivered from the greatest curse with which it has ever been afflicted.

I remain,
Your sincere well-wisher,

A TOTAL ABSTAINER AND NO SMOKER.



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