



A WEEKLY JOURNAL DEVOTED TO THE HISTORY, PHENOMENA, PHILOSOPHY, AND TEACHINGS OF

SPIRITUALISM.

ESTABLISHED: AS A MONTHLY—JUNE, 1868; AS A WEEKLY—APRIL 8, 1870.

[REGISTERED FOR TRANSMISSION ABROAD.]

No. 849.—Vol. XVII.]

LONDON. JULY 9, 1886.

[PRICE 1½D.]

THE SPIRIT-MESSENGER.

TEMPERANCE LEGISLATION: THE OUTCAST POOR.

A CONTROL BY "JOHN B. GOUGH, THE TEMPERANCE ORATOR."
Recorded by A. T. T. P., June 19th, 1886.

[A working man, in the unconscious trance, dictates these communications to a retired professional gentleman, who takes them down verbatim.]

The Sensitive, in trance said:—

Gravely discussing, on the very eve of a dissolution, a question, in reality of great importance although treated in a light and trivial manner; namely, that of the undesirableness of allowing children of tender age to enter a public-house in the great towns of this kingdom, doomed as they are, whilst they are being served, to hear some of the most vulgar, and often disgusting language from the adult frequenters there. The attempt to carry out this preventive law is designated as an attempt to revive grand-motherly government; on the contrary I myself thank God for this aroused zeal for the better social welfare of the working classes.

The country, which can claim such philanthropists as its sons, may well wait in confidence for an ever-increasing prosperity. Such men are but fulfilling the work, to which God has appointed them. They point out to a country's rulers their neglected duties to the poor. They appeal for pity and sympathy for the neglected little ones of your large towns. There are some thinkers, who ask themselves: Is it wise to feel sympathy for the outcast poor? I tell such, that it is this early introduction to vice and idleness, that forms the class designated the "outcast poor," between whom and the "honest poor" there is a sharp dividing line. There are men, who argue very ably respecting the responsibility of parents, however poor, in maintaining and educating those, whom they have so recklessly brought into being. I am not prepared to advocate recklessness in giving, but the immediately-required necessity, which the outcast poor can rightfully claim, is preventive measures, that shall make the vendors of spirits and malt liquors amenable to the law, if they serve any one below a certain age.

Many changes have come about since your work of recording began several years ago. Both you and your readers must have considered, that your spirit surroundings were heedlessly delaying other subjects, and dwelling too much and too long on the subject of improved homes for the working classes. On that subject many good and sincere Spiritualists, as well as Christian believers, argued rather forcibly, that the very poor, or the outcast poor, had no desire for a change of home from the crowded courts and alleys, where the sun's rays but seldom entered; that they had no desire to get out into the open; no desire to lay claim to healthier and brighter homes. They needed, so ran the argument,

educating up to such a claim; but the trial has been made, and block on block of model workman's homes have been built. Not only in the metropolis itself, but in all its suburbs, good houses have been erected in lieu of the dens they were occupying, and the pride of cleanliness has been proved. Those, who were the most doubted; those, of whom it was expected, that neither by care nor persistent effort would be made to live decently, have proved this fact, that the only way of educating into habits of cleanliness of home is, that a good home at a moderate rental should be offered to these suspects, to these members of the outcast poor.

Self-respect is a possession belonging to all men. Surroundings may make the feeling nearly dormant, but cleanliness of home is an appeal sufficient to raise and to awaken extended thoughts on life's subjects. Already the change in the working masses and also in the outcast poor is making itself felt; they are beginning to realize that the lowest-priced article, whether in food, in apparel, or even a home, is not always the cheapest. The efforts, that have already been made by the capitalists, have been so appreciated, that each and all of these improved homes for the poor are returning fair interest for the capital invested. It was suggested that Government should render its powerful aid.—[Here I thought to myself within myself, let us have no Government aid], but I think with you, that the comforts of a home in exchange for the many existing dens of iniquity is quite possible and practicable, by means of private capital without any State assistance whatever; but the question of suppressing the consequences of the traffic in drink is, to my mind, as great a question in respect of its great need as the change of homes.

Poverty as well as accumulated wealth have had their causes. The lowest depth of poverty is never reached unless the sufferer or sufferers have had as companions in their downward career dissipation and idleness, and when dissipation and idleness, more specially both, attack the poor man, it is generally to be traced directly to the effect of drink; therefore, all that could be done to save this from spreading amongst the lower orders, should be earnestly and zealously attempted; for poverty in its lowest form, I mean when self-respect is destroyed and callousness reigns potent in the soul, then becomes a social disease more disastrous than cholera as an infection: for then it becomes dangerous. All the dangers that threaten social life can come alone from the outcast poor; for they are living on from day to day, craving only for some change; they know it must be, if anything, for the better.

Some of your surroundings have entered very learnedly on the subject, giving various causes to explain the position of the outcast poor. Some are laying the blame on the passing of the Free Trade Acts; others lay the blame on machinery; but I as a practical man rather choose to give a reason entirely different from either. Wages have for years steadily increased; they were very different indeed, when I was in business forty