

FIFTY YEARS AGO;
OR
EARLY PRESTON
TEETOTALISM.

BY WILLIAM LIVESEY.

READ AT THE CONFERENCE IN CONNECTION WITH THE CRYSTAL
PALACE TEMPERANCE JUBILEE.

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FAC-SIMILE OF THE FIRST TEETOTAL PLEDGE.

Subjoined is a fac-simile of the pledge and signatures written by Joseph Livesey, fifty years ago. Full particulars respecting it will be found at page 4.

*We agree to Abstain from
all Liquors of an Intoxicating
Quality, whether Ale Porter
Wine, or Ardent Spirits, except
as Medicine.*

John Gratrix

Edu^d Dickinson

Mrs. Broadbent

Mrs. Smith

Joseph Livesey

David Anderson

Mrs. Perry

EARLY PRESTON TEETOTALISM.

By WILLIAM LIVESSEY, PRESTON.

[Read at the Conference in connection with the Crystal Palace Temperance Jubilee, held on Sept. 5th, 1882. Reprinted from the *Temperance Record*.]

I fear what I am about to read will seem to some a very old story. I never presumed to write what is dignified by the name of a "Paper." All I promised was a compilation, and even that to be restricted to the doings of the "Men of Preston" in the earliest years of their advocacy of teetotalism. It was on September 1, 1832—fifty years ago—that the teetotal pledge was drawn up by Joseph Livesey, and the National Temperance League has fittingly chosen to hold this jubilee as near the exact date as practicable. This day's assemblage is, therefore, not to celebrate the beginning of the movement in England against the drinking of ardent spirits; that crusade began fifty-three years ago. It first originated in America in 1826, was brought from there to Scotland in 1829, and thence to Bradford in England, from which place the movement spread over the kingdom in 1829-30-31-32. This day's great gathering is to commemorate the commencement of the advocacy of the only sound temperance principles—those of total abstinence from all kinds of liquor that contain an intoxicating property, regardless of their mode of manufacture, or their name, or colour, or flavour, or strength. And the first national effort put forth for the advocacy of those principles undoubtedly began at Preston, and from thence, by means of Preston men, spread throughout the kingdom. But we are better known by the briefer term of teetotalers than total abstiners. The word teetotal is now familiar not only to us but throughout the world. And while we now find it in every dictionary and encyclopedia, fifty years ago it was not to be found in any of them. At the time it was first uttered by Dicky Turner (for that was his familiar name) it had never before been heard in Preston. Turner was quite an unlettered man, but most earnest and often impetuous in the speeches he delivered, and it was his impetuosity of speech that caused him to coin on the instant the word "teetotal." He seemed to be filled with the feeling that abstinence from all intoxicating liquors was so immeasurably superior to the abstinence only from those of the most fiery character, that he wanted to speak of his abstinence in the superlative degree. He had evidently the word total upon his lips, but felt that it was too poor to express his burning thought, and hence he added a prefix, and out rushed the word teetotal, at the utterance of which the crowded audience loudly cheered. Mr. Livesey, placing his hands upon Turner's shoulder, exclaimed, "That shall be the name, Dicky!" And that is how we total abstiners became to be called teetotalers. To show the vast earnestness of this poor man, in 1846 he set out on foot, being in but indifferent health, to walk from Preston to London (a distance of 214 miles by direct route), to attend the World's Temperance Convention then being held in the great metropolis. He attended meetings at some places on his way, but was detained for a time by illness at Nottingham. Fortunately he succeeded in reaching London, and was able to attend the conference. His enthusiastic spirit was stronger than his physical frame, and he did not long survive that hard journey. His death occurred on October 29, 1846. He signed the teetotal pledge in October, 1832, and conscientiously kept it.

Having shown how the word teetotal originated, let us see when its principles began to take root, and how they spread over the Kingdom. Early in March, 1831, Mr. Livesey adopted the principles of teetotalism. He had an adult Sunday School, and amongst other teachers was Mr. Hy. Bradley, afterwards Secretary of the Preston Temperance Society for many years. Another teacher was Mr. John Broadbent, one of "the Seven Men of Preston." Mr. Livesey having introduced temperance tracts into his school, the teachers towards the end of 1831 decided to establish a temperance society, and this resolution they carried out on January 1st, 1832, theirs being the first temperance society in Preston. The fact of Mr. Broadbent proposing that the pledge of this society should be a teetotal one shows how early Mr. Livesey's teetotalism bore fruit. A majority, however, decided against Mr. Broadbent's pro-

position, and the pledge adopted was what afterwards became known as the "moderation" pledge, which term no doubt arose from that pledge stating that moderation must be used in drinking fermented liquors. Turning from the little society of the school to the town at large, early in 1832 tracts were circulated amongst its inhabitants which had been supplied to Mr. Swindlehurst by Mr. John Finch, of Liverpool. Amongst others prominent in their distribution was Mr. John Smith, the fourth on the list of "the Seven Men of Preston." This tract distribution, aided by the movement of the School Society, led to the establishment of the Preston Temperance Society at a public meeting held on March 22nd, 1832, the pledge adopted being in effect the same as that in the School Society, which then became part of the parent society. The committee appointed at the public meeting, and afterwards enlarged, proved to include energetic men, and some of them teetotalers. Meetings were at once held in various school rooms for the advocacy of the principles of the society, and a month had not elapsed before teetotalism was being urged upon the hearers. On the 15th of May, weekly meetings on a Tuesday evening began to be held in the Cockpit, which became the Temperance Hall, and the first of that designation in the kingdom. It would hold 700 hearers, and was densely crowded at every meeting; additional meetings were also held in various school rooms. Soon were seen the first fruits of all these meetings by reformed drunkards coming forward as speakers, and their addresses had great influence upon the masses. Remembering that Mr. Broadbelt was out-voted on Jan. 1st, on the question of the adoption of the pledge of teetotalism, it was in the natural order of things that the respective merits of the two principles should become a matter of common discussion, especially as teetotalism was being advocated at the meetings, and though as yet no teetotal pledge had been presented for signature, there is plenty of evidence that numbers had been acting strictly up to it for some time; many of the earliest reformed drunkards did so, one of them, Edward Dickinson (the second on the list of "the Seven Men"), had been a teetotaler from the establishment of the society in March. On August 23rd, another of "the Seven Men," Mr. John King, got into a discussion on the two principles with Mr. Livesey at his place of business, and this resulted in the latter drawing up a teetotal pledge and, having done so, requested Mr. King to sign it first, he following with his signature. Eight days after that event Mr. Livesey called a meeting to be held in the Cockpit on Saturday evening, Sept. 1st, when he urged the adoption of a teetotal pledge for general signature. What occurred on that now memorable occasion, which we are met here this day to celebrate, is thus told by the Preston teetotal historian, Mr. Joseph Dearden, who writes thus:—"I remember attending the meeting, and I may well remember the warm discussion which took place at it, for I was one who went in for more caution and less speed. As the earnest proceedings were drawing to a close, and some were leaving, a number got grouped together at one side of the room still debating the matter, when at length Mr. Livesey resolved he would draw up a total abstinence pledge. He pulled a small memorandum book out of his pocket, and having written the pledge in black lead, he read it over, and standing with the book in his hand he said, 'Whose name shall I put down?' Six gave their names, and Mr. Livesey made up the number to seven. Next day Mr. Livesey, finding the blacklead writing not very good, copied in ink the pledge, and the signatures in the order in which they were given. The original I have in my possession." That pledge (which you have upon the medal struck for this occasion) reads "We agree to Abstain from All Liquors of an Intoxicating Quality, whether Ale, Porter, Wine, or Ardent Spirits, except as Medicine." The signatures are in the following order: John Gratrix, Edward Dickinson, John Broadbelt, John Smith, Joseph Livesey, David Anderton, John King. Messrs. Livesey, King, and Gratrix are still alive. The names of "the Seven Men of Preston" having been so extensively published, it is only right to others to repeat what Dearden says—that the prominence given to them was entirely due to the accident of their being present at a special meeting convened on an inconvenient night of the week at which many of the most prominent advocates of teetotalism were absent. Mr. Livesey names no fewer than twenty-six who did a great deal more to forward the cause and secure its success than some of the seven. Had they

but been present at that meeting, Swindlehurst, with his stentorian voice, would have rushed to head the list; eloquent and enthusiastic Grubb would have been equally ready; and the fervent and fearless Teare would not have lagged in the rear; while the retiring but brilliant Henry Anderton (the poet) would have swelled the number; as would also the genial Isaac Grundy, and that teetotaler of Tichbornian proportions, William Howarth—familiarily known as "Slender Billy." Others might be named did time permit. Keeping to chronological order, it may be here stated that on the 24th December, 1832, was opened at Preston the first temperance hotel in the kingdom. Coming to 1833, at the annual meeting of the Preston society, a teetotal pledge, in effect the same as that drawn up in September by Mr. Livesey, was adopted as the pledge of the society, and now being strictly official was at once re-signed by a considerable number. The society had now two pledges. Mr. Livesey at this time was publishing a sixpenny monthly magazine—*The Moral Reformer*—and in July he set apart a portion of it for the furtherance of teetotalism, giving it the special heading of *The Temperance Advocate*, and on the 1st January, 1834, he commenced a penny monthly paper with that heading. This was the first teetotal serial issued in the kingdom. Mr. Livesey continued to edit it and publish it in 1834-5-6-7, and it has been issued under other managements ever since, being now the organ of the British Temperance League. At the annual meeting of the Preston Society in March, 1834, the words "neither give nor offer" were added to the teetotal pledge, two pledges being still continued. On April 18th, the youths of the town, led on largely by those who were teachers at Mr. Livesey's adult school, formed a society with one pledge—that of teetotalism, 101 signatures being secured at the first meeting. Coming to 1835, at the annual meeting of the Preston Society in March, the long-desired step was taken by the abandonment of the so-called "moderation" pledge, and the adoption of the only pledge of safety, that of teetotalism, which read thus:—"I do voluntarily promise that I will abstain from ale, porter, wine, ardent spirits, and all intoxicating liquors, and will not give nor offer them to others, except as medicines or in a religious ordinance." The 26th of March, 1835, was indeed a red-letter day in Preston, the bells of the parish church being rung, and other demonstrations of rejoicing to commemorate the event. All the moderation members who did not move onward by signing the teetotal pledge by the end of three months ceased to be regarded as belonging to the society. Since that date no change has taken place in the pledge of the society.

We will now briefly notice the operations of the Preston Society in 1832-3-4-5. In looking over the reports for those years we find a vast amount of work done at a small cost; and this, too, when so much was spent in the circulation of tracts, which were written specially for the Society by Dr. Harrison, Mr. Livesey, and Mr. Grundy—members of the Committee. The earliest tracts had a teetotal ring with them: the title of one was "Ale and other Fermented Liquors," another was "The Great Delusion," which was an abridged edition of Mr. Livesey's Malt Liquor Lecture, about which the editor of *Welcome* for July, in the present year, after speaking of the marvellous effect produced by its delivery, states that it is worthy of note that to its delivery was due not a few of the early advocates, including Dr. Lees and Thomas Whittaker; he adds:—"If Joseph Livesey had done nothing more than his frequent repetition of this most convincing lecture in the chief towns of the land, he would have merited national thanks." In the earliest years of the movement Preston was the head publishing place for teetotal tracts, and other publications on temperance. At that date, besides holding an average two meetings a week throughout the year, the dissemination of temperance teaching by means of tracts and extensive visitation of the people at their own homes were two marked features in the society's operations; indeed, the rules of the society required a systematic weekly visitation. The town was divided into twenty-eight districts, to each of which a captain was appointed who was well supplied with tracts and pledge cards. The third rule of the society also required that all pledge breakers should be visited by one or more of the committee. The extensive visitation, which was thoroughly and continuously carried out in those early days, led to the best results, not only in strengthening the hands of the weak, but in converting those who had not

joined the society. This work of sympathy and self-sacrifice was a most potent instrument in building up the society. Of late years we have had articles in all the daily papers, from the *Times* downwards, and also in a large number of weekly ones, on "How to Reach the Masses." This problem the men of Preston solved at the first sitting of their committee; they saw the way and walked therein. Nothing is easier than reaching the masses, but people nowadays won't adopt the Preston plan of going directly to the people, visiting them at their own homes, and talking kindly to them at their own firesides. Such work could not fail of success, and the good effects of the society's operations at this date were endorsed both by the judge at the County Assize and the chaplain of Preston Gaol. Seven assizes at that period went over without a single case from Preston, and crime at the Quarter Sessions decreased 40 per cent. The third annual report (of 1834) states that through the operations of the society many of the places of worship were better attended, and that at one of them so numerous was the attendance of reclaimed persons that it obtained the designation of the "Reformed Drunkards' Church."

But extensive and arduous as was the work done in the town of Preston, much missionary work had also been undertaken; so early as the second annual report teetotal societies had been established in twenty of the surrounding villages and towns; and in that year we find a flying missionary excursion to places at a greater distance. Messrs. Livesey, Swindlehurst, Teare, and Anderton visited in one week, Blackburn, Haslingden, Bury, Heywood, Rochdale, Oldham, Ashton, Stockport, Manchester, and Bolton. Travelling in a car (there were no railways in those days), at several of the places they had to call their intended meeting after their arrival, driving through the town with a flag flying and scattering tracts; in one town they rang a bell, and in another got a man to beat a drum. After that fashion was teetotalism spread in those days. In the following year teetotalism was first introduced into Birmingham and London by Mr. Livesey, he visiting each place single handed. Difficulties met him at both places; some of the Society of Friends at Birmingham, in whose Meeting House the meeting was to be held, were alarmed on hearing that the use of ale and wine was to be condemned; but the meeting was held as first arranged, and one good result was the accession to teetotalism of the Cadbury family. Mr. Livesey arrived in London on June 18, and afterwards delivered his Malt Liquor Lecture in a room in Providence Row, Finsbury Square. In his anxiety to get an audience he went about sticking up small bills (calling the meeting), with wafers on the walls of the Bank of England and other places. The following year he, with Swindlehurst and Howarth, visited London, and this time he tried to get an audience by going out with Howarth and ringing a bell, which proceeding was stopped by the police, but not before its sound had been heard by a brother of the beloved Jabez Inwards, and thus it was the means of early bringing the Inwards family into the fold of teetotalism. Four hundred persons attended the meeting, which was held in Theobald's Road, Red Lion Square, and the first teetotal society in London was formed at it. Two other meetings were held at other buildings, and on this occasion the Preston men had the efficient help of that earnest and indefatigable advocate, Mr. John Andrew, of Leeds. During the year two other missionary excursions were made by Preston men to Wigan, Rochdale, Todmorden, Burnley, Lancaster, Ulverston, and Kendal. Messrs. Grubb and Teare also had a teetotal tour in Yorkshire and the northern counties, and in December Mr. Teare established the first society in the Isle of Man. The efforts of the Preston men led in September of that year to the holding of a conference of deputies at Manchester, which in the following year was succeeded by another, out of which sprang the British Temperance League. At the beginning of the teetotal movement the Preston Society in its operations was a League in itself. This Mr. Hoyle fully sets forth in a paper he read at the Preston Jubilee in July. The first president of the British League was Robert Guest White, Esq., of Dublin, who, after becoming a teetotaler by his visit to Preston, carried its principles to Dublin. Mr. John Finch, of Liverpool, whose teetotalism was adopted at Preston, established many teetotal societies in Ireland in 1835, finding in the course of a very extended tour none existing. Mr. Edward Morris, of Glasgow, visited

Preston in 1832, where he joined the society, and was the means afterwards of establishing the first teetotal society in Glasgow. This was at a meeting in September, 1836, held in the Lyceum Rooms, Nelson Square, when thirty-seven persons enrolled themselves as teetotalers. On his way to Preston, he held meetings at Paisley, Kilmarnock, Dumfries, and many other Scotch towns; but he found no teetotal societies in operation until he reached Preston.

We have already noticed much missionary work by Messrs. Livesey, Grubb, Teare, and others, but towards the close of 1835 it seemed the time had come for still further efforts of that kind by Preston men. In the autumn of that year Whittaker went out, under the direction of Mr. Livesey, labouring chiefly in Lancashire. In May, 1836, he went through Westmoreland, Cumberland, Northumberland, and Durham, travelling on foot, with his rattle calling many of the meetings he had to address. This was as the agent of the British League; his salary was only £1 per week, but unable to retain his services the Preston Society then took him up, and he laboured six months for them in the counties of York, Derby, Nottingham, Lincoln, Leicester, Northampton, and Bedford. His next engagement was with the new British and Foreign Temperance Society—now the National League. For them he laboured in London, also in Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, and the Eastern counties. Teare started as a missionary in May, striking for the West of England, Cornwall receiving a very large share of his earnest advocacy. Time will not permit me to enumerate the counties he visited, but at the end of two years they numbered twenty. Edward Grubb, with "his matchless oratory and magnificent powers of reasoning and logic," was another of the Preston men whose missionary labours were most extensive, and these included visits to Ireland, to Scotland, and to the Isle of Man. Another was Henry Anderton, the poet. One illustration of his missionary work I must quote. The writer says:—"He travelled most parts of Lancashire and visited many towns in Yorkshire and Cheshire, mostly on foot. He frequently walked from Preston to Manchester (thirty-two miles), and spoke the same evening, and the same to Todmorden;" and I know he did so to other places. Anderton's brilliant speeches used to electrify the Cockpit audiences, and when I say he might most fitly be styled the Gough of that period, you will form some idea of his oratory, and you can have no doubt of his self-sacrifice. The Preston men being the pioneers in the movement, their work was no ordinary everyday character; nay, the very reverse. Opposition varied and virulent they had to face on every hand, some met them with the force of argument, while others resorted to the argument of force. Whittaker gives a graphic description of the latter—he was stoned in the streets of Whitehaven; at Barton, in Essex, the house he lodged in was surrounded by a mob in the night demanding his body, and he was also pelted while on the coach; at Kettering there was an intent to throw him into a pond; at Stogumber, Somerset, a mob headed by a band of music broke the windows of the Baptist Chapel, and while his hearers crouched in the pews for shelter, he did the same in the pulpit. No doubt but Teare could tell much the same tale, and that Grubb and Anderton had to battle against somewhat similar heathenish violence. They had also arrayed against them the ignorant beliefs and deep-rooted prejudices of the age; the people then believed that intoxicating liquors were useful and absolutely necessary. Again, those who admitted the injurious effects of ardent spirits, were still strong believers in the virtues of ale and wine; these were, in some sense, the foes of one's own household, and were too often the bitterest of opponents. One of the ablest of this class denounced the pledge of teetotalism as "horrid," styling its advocates as "fanatics," who held "revolting and monstrous errors," and speaking in Yorkshire he strengthened the "great delusion" of the people of that county as to the virtues of ale by asserting that the alcohol in it was "sheathed," and, therefore, not injurious! In these present days, looking back at those long past, it seems almost incredible that they who could see so much evil in spirits styled "ardent," could at the same time believe that the spirits in ale and wine were "good creatures of God," and that they were infidels who refused to idolise those creatures of fallen man's creation. Half a century has worked a wonderful change; now in place of

alcoholic liquors being called "good creatures of God," they have been styled (and that, too, by one not a teetotaler) "the devil in solution." The period I have been referring to was known as "the battle of the pledges;" and fierce was the fight in those days. The Beer Bill of 1830 had not only brought the sale to every man's door, but had added to the false belief in it as an article of food. The supporters of that measure, like those in more recent days who favoured the drinking of light wines, believed that the sale of fermented liquors would supersede those which were distilled; both were equally and seriously in error, and we are still suffering from the evils of both. In the early days of the Preston men the Pulpit and the Press were dead against their views, while to add to the many other foes were those of the makers and sellers of intoxicating liquors, who had at that time public opinion largely at their back. Briefly (for want of time) as this part of the subject has been touched, sufficient has been said to show the vast amount of work done, and the persecution, obloquy, and hardship endured by the pioneers in this noble cause; pioneers who were willing thus to labour and sacrifice both health and time and substance for the reclamation and elevation of their fellow-men deserve to be classed amongst the world's great heroes.

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