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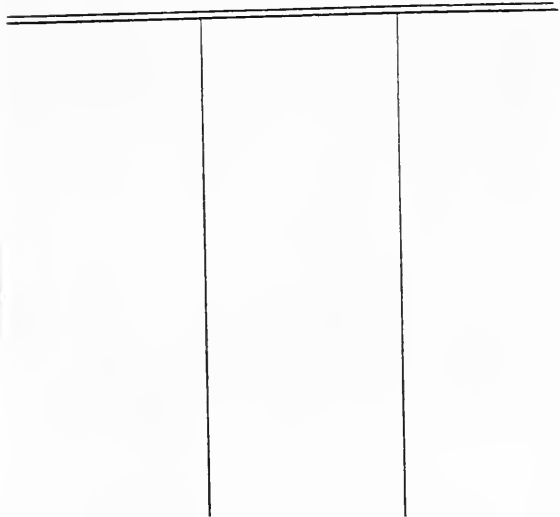
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ARGUMENTS FOR TEMPERANCE;

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A SERMON

ADDRESSED TO THE STUDENTS OF THE

UNIVERSITY

OF

NORTH-CAROLINA,

MARCH 13TH, 1831,

AND PUBLISHED BY THEIR REQUEST.

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*BY E. MITCHELL,*

PROFESSOR OF CHEMISTRY, ETC.

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**Raleigh:**

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1831.







## NOTE.

The University of North-Carolina has suffered, in common with the other literary institutions of the Country, from the evils against which the following Discourse is directed. It is not supposed they have been felt more severely here than elsewhere. In the summer of 1829, some of the Students formed themselves into a Temperance Society, and since that time it has been in our power to say to Parents, that there is one form of vice from which they have nothing to fear for their sons at the University. Whatever may be the merits of the general Temperance question (and the writer has no doubts upon that point, or respecting the issue to which it will be brought in the course of the next ten years) it will not be denied, that the persons by whom this particular Society was established, and by whom it has been supported, have rendered an essential service to the people of this State, nor deemed strange that the author of the following pages should feel a deep interest in its permanence and prosperity.— Besides these statements, no apology will be necessary for having furnished this Discourse for the Press. The train of remark and argument presented in it, does not differ, in some places, from what may be found in certain recent publications. It is known that it was written out and delivered in the first instance more than a year ago.

*University of N. C. April 8, 1831.*

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# A SERMON

Timothy 5, 23. "Drink no longer water but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities."

IT is known to most of my audience, that within a few years the public mind has in various ways been awakened to a consideration of the mischiefs of Intemperance.—Methods have been eagerly enquired after of arresting the progress of an evil that is pouring down like a deluge over the land and burying the happiness of thousands of families in hopeless ruin. The plans proposed for effecting this object are abundantly simple. They consist merely in the formation of societies the members of which bind themselves, either indefinitely or for a certain time, to abstain altogether from the use of distilled spirits. An association of this kind already exists in the University.—It is not doubted that the good work which has been begun will be carried on with unremitting zeal, and as most of us are likely to be compelled to take some attitude—that of either friend or foe to the new institution that is springing up in the country, it is important that its principles and objects should be well understood. It would appear at first sight to be impossible, as it certainly is unreasonable, that the hostile feeling of any one should be excited; the members proposing to bind *themselves* only to abstinence, and not other people. Experience has however shewn, that no benevolent undertaking can be carried into effect without a struggle with men, who from various motives of interest or passion, are led to oppose it. The attention of my hearers will be called to three different points.

I. To the necessity of *some* measures for arresting the desolating progress of Intemperance in this land.

II. To the adequacy and expediency of the means proposed for effecting the object in view. An opportunity will here be afforded of answering certain objections that

Jy has hitherto been found for it—It embraces not the animal part of our nature only in the circle of its ravages, but the entire man. The understanding and the heart sink alike; every glorious faculty obscured, and every amiable and lovely feeling destroyed.

Hence is the injustice apparent of permitting our anger to burn too hotly against the man who has fallen a victim to habits of Intemperance, and of regarding him as a being under the influence of a kind of charm which he has the power to break loose from and escape, if he would. Probably no one living is more sensible than he of the present degradation and final ruin he is bringing upon himself: many a melancholy hour do his thoughts dwell upon the calamities that are about to overwhelm him, many a bitter tear does he drop upon those chains that have already become too strong for him to break, he forms many a beautiful scheme of reformation—as he is giving it the finishing touches, he feels the strong and unnatural appetite he has created commence its gnawings, and turns for relief to the glass where, with the means of present gratification and enjoyment, he well knows that the elements of future and remediless disgrace and suffering are mingled.

Hence also is manifest the danger of the most distant approaches to that gloomy gulf, deliverance from which is hardly, if at all, (and the hand of Almighty God being visibly stretched out to pluck us from ruin) to be expected. Let no one regard Intemperance as a monster from whose jaws it is easy to escape when we have been once brought within the circle of his power. Experience has proved, that no amount of native talent, of information or firmness of character, is a security. If the grim tyrant habit have thrown his chains around us, it is all but hopeless to struggle with our fate. Before those chains shall have been fairly rivetted, our whole constitution, physical, intellectual and moral, will have undergone a change, and we shall no longer be the men we were.

It seems hardly necessary to state in detail how fatal are habits of Intemperance to the poor wretch who has become their victim. Standing high perhaps in the society

of which he is a member, he finds the respect with which an antecedent life of virtue, temperance and integrity has been rewarded, passing silently away, like the snows of spring, beneath the influence of the sun. The old, whose conduct used to shew how highly they prized his friendship, and the young, who were once so eager to exhibit evidence of their esteem and regard, now pass him by without any more than a cold and distant salutation. His opinion has no longer the same weight in cases of doubt and perplexity. His neighbours think that a cloud has settled down upon his judgment and darkened that mental eye once so clear and keen. He begins to suspect, himself, that mankind do him no injustice. His affairs are involved in confusion and disorder, and either his schemes are not laid with his usual sagacity, or the turns of accident and fortune are very much against him. He finds that he has lost a portion of his power for both physical and mental exertion. His family appear melancholy and dejected, and it is in vain that he wakes up all his wit and tries by the most sprightly sallies to revive their drooping spirits. They used to meet him when he returned from a distance with countenances lighted up with smiles, and welcome home the protector, husband, friend and father. But the time comes at length, when his wife and children no longer rejoice at his return, but as he approaches they stand silent; their hearts wrung with unutterable sorrow, and turn away their eyes and refuse to look upon the ruin and degradation of what was once so venerable and lovely. Oh, if there be any one thing beneath the circuit of the sky of which there is any hope that it will awaken the strong feelings of nature, that are either asleep or dead within him, and rouse him to one last despairing effort to shake off his chains and regain his freedom, it is that distress of his family. But often, as we know, even that is unavailing. The voice of the strong appetite he has created is louder than the voice of nature, and the mansion that has hitherto been the abode of love and peace, becomes the very scene of his excesses, and when his brain is heated to phrenzy, the arm of violence is perhaps raised against a woman—the wife of his bosom, or against those children

who should be the objects of his tenderest love. But why pursue the melancholy story, the particulars of which, from the unhappy frequency of their occurrence, are but too well known to us all? Why speak of the ruin of his credit, the wasting of his property, the quarrels (with his best friends too) into which he is betrayed, when petulant and ill-natured through the effect of intoxication? His friends deriving no pleasure from his society, at length forsake him. His estate is squandered, and his children, (because the wealth that should have come down to them from their ancestors, is intercepted in its descent by the author of their being, whom the law of nature that binds even the brute creation, required to be their friend and protector) are driven away to seek their fortune in some foreign land and on a distant shore.

The poor wretch himself feels at length the access of those diseases of which he has been so long sowing the seeds. The poison he has been for years taking into his system operates decisively. He sinks beneath a complicated load of disorders and infirmities—shall I say into a late or an early grave? An early grave, inasmuch as he has but just reached the age when the sober and temperate part of mankind are in their prime—a late one also, for he has long since ceased to be useful in the world, and ceased therefore to execute the office for which God created him, and for which his life was prolonged from day to day--and again I say, an early grave; for has not he died too soon, who has died, as there is but too much reason to fear, with his sins unrepented of, and therefore unforgiven; who was unable to endure the scrutiny which mankind are accustomed to institute, and by which they try each others characters; how shall he abide the inquisition of that Holy God in whose sight the heavens themselves are impure.

But suppose the man who has killed himself with strong drink to be committed to the grave, his past conduct does not cease to influence the happiness of mankind, and his follies and crimes continue to live in their effects when he is no more.

If we diligently enquire what is that more than any

other thing—perhaps I might safely say, which more than all other things, influences the peace and prosperity of a community, we shall find it is the education of its younger members. Mankind are every where the same at their birth, but the effect of early impressions is infinite. If the child be taught from his very earliest years to lisp his little prayers, and as he advances towards manhood care be taken to imbue his youthful mind with the pure principles of virtue, morality and religion; if he be taught to aspire to every thing that is good and generous and kind and noble, that child can hardly fail, when he shall ripen into a man, of becoming a worthy and useful citizen. If all the youth of a country be thus educated, that will be a happy country.

But if on the other hand, the heart of the child be left an uncultivated field, where weeds and brambles may spring up and grow and flourish if they list; if he be permitted to select his associates amongst the abandoned sons of idleness and guilt; that child, unless there be something very peculiar in his moral and intellectual character, will be very likely, to say the least, to prove a curse to the society in which he lives. If the youth of a country be generally thus neglected, no matter what may be its physical advantages or the form of its government, its soil may be fertile as the borders of the Nile, its government monarchical, aristocratical or democratical, as you choose, that country, taken as a whole, will be poor and wretched. It is vain to think of legislating for such a country under the idea of making it peaceful, flourishing and happy. We may borrow the pen of Draco, and write the statute book from end to end in letters of blood; we may crown the summit of every mountain and hill with a gibbet and a prison—a midst all that apparatus of law and justice, vice will present herself with a bold unblushing countenance in the most public places, and laugh the lawgiver and judge to scorn.

Now it is most evident, that however well the drunkard may provide for the intellectual education of his family (and the probability is that he will make but indifferent

provision) their moral and religious education must be miserably neglected. How will he dare to assemble his children about him to unfold and explain to them the distinctions between good and evil, vice and virtue, with their eternal sanctions—recommend the one and warn them to avoid the other—he whose conduct is an open violation of the laws of morality and religion every day that he lives?

It sometimes happens undoubtedly, that when one parent is thus forgetful of the duties they both owe to their common offspring, the other steps forward to supply the deficiency and becomes both father and mother to the children. But it is most unreasonable to expect, that wherever there is an intemperate father, there will be a sensible and judicious mother. And even supposing this to be the case, she can in part only and not entirely remedy the evil. The child needs the unwearied exertions of both parents to form him to usefulness and greatness, and when he is blessed with the guiding hand of but one, and the influence of the other is employed so far as it goes to render the care and labour of that one unavailing, it is very evident he will never reach the eminence he would have attained had both acted in concert and harmony. And very often, as experience abundantly shows, the drunkard not only ruins himself but (his children copying his example and acquiring in early life his habits) drags down all that are connected with him to ruin.

We made choice of an intemperate father to sit for the portrait we have drawn, and to furnish materials for this brief and melancholy history. We might have selected any other member of the family; have told how the *timid* maiden flies the presence of the intemperate youth, or laments with bitter and unavailing tears the hour when she consented to listen to his addresses; we might have told of his father's shame and sorrow; how grief like a sharp arrow pierces his mother's soul, and how his day closes in clouds and darkness when it is hardly yet begun. We might have described the career of the intemperate mother—but here the subject becomes too revolting and horrible, and it is unnecessary to dwell upon it.



We need no holy Prophet, with a breast labouring with the inspiration of the Almighty, to inform us that intemperance is a crime, and to denounce it as a tremendous evil. God hath already made known to us by infallible marks, by the effects which are associated with it and follow it, the nature of this species of excess, and no nation or people under heaven has ever mistaken the import of these indications. Jew and Gentile, the white man, the red man, the African, Turk and Pagan, believer and infidel—all hold the same language respecting it, all warn mankind against it as a dreadful whirlpool, that has already swallowed up, and will hereafter swallow up, wealth, distinction, talents, beauty, youth and venerable age. The ancient Spartans used to make their slaves drunk in the presence of their children, that they might inspire the future guardians of their country with a suitable abhorrence of so degrading a vice. *Hobbes*, the enemy of revealed religion, who was willing, as much as in him lay, to break up and destroy the distinction between vice and virtue, taught that voluntary drunkenness is a breach of the law of nature, which directs us to preserve the use of our reason.

Calculations may be seen in different publications, of the amount that is wasted annually in these United States, in the preparation and purchase of ardent spirits—and with no benefit whatever to our population. But of this I do not propose to speak at the present time. The mere expence the nation could bear, large as the sum is—amounting to some millions of dollars, that is thus needlessly thrown away every year. But this is little compared with the expenditure of a different kind by which it is accompanied, the annihilation of moral worth and virtuous character, of hope, respect and love, that attends it. How many joyful countenances do the effects of Intemperance every year sadden; how many hearts are wrung with unutterable sorrow. *Rush* computed, many years ago, that four thousand persons die annually in these United States from the abuse of intoxicating liquors. His estimates are supposed to have been much too low at the time when they were made; they certainly fall very greatly be-

hind the amount of mortality arising from this source at the present day. If we ask what it is that crowds the criminal docket of our Courts with causes, every lawyer will point to Intemperance as the ever-bubbling and perennial fountain from which the mischief flowed. If we look into the poor-houses, jails, hospitals and lunatic asylums, from one end of the land to the other, and enquire what it is that has brought the wretched inmates there, we shall learn that more than one-half, nearly three-quarters, may safely assign too free a use of ardent spirits as the cause of their ruin. The country is deprived of the labour of these persons, amounting to many thousands, and burthened with their support—their friends and relatives are sharers in their infamy.

These are evils of the present life. If it were allowed me to borrow from the Angel mentioned in the Revelations, the key of the bottomless pit, to unlock its iron gates, call forth such of its inhabitants as the sin of drunkenness caused to be thrust down into that gloomy and eternal prison, and compel them to tell the history of their fall, and with what punishments a just God now visits their transgressions, I should obtain materials for a darker and more heart-rending tale.

Is not some remedy for the evils of Intemperance loudly called for? If a remedy of safe and easy application shall be devised, can any man claim to be considered a worthy member of the society in which he lives who shall refuse his aid in applying it? I proceed, secondly, to consider the adequacy and expediency of that proposed by the friends and patrons of the Temperance Society.

They regard it as a settled principle in that philosophy which treats of the nature of man, of his grandeur and meanness, of his moral weakness in the full possession of intellectual strength, that he is too frail a being to be trusted with the unrestrained use of intoxicating liquors, such as they are presented to us the result of the refinements of modern art. The soundness of this principle men may pretend to doubt; but if there be any truths that have been established on the basis of full and frequent experiment,

this is of the number. The trial has been made in every quarter of the country ; the north, the south, the east, the west. Many thousands of human lives have been consumed in providing materials for an accurate decision. The inevitable conclusion is, that it is unsafe for any living man to confide in his skill to elude, or his strength to resist, the attacks of this destroyer. The learned and able judge, the statesman, skilful in unravelling the tangled web of political intrigue, the recluse scholar, the merchant, the planter, the preacher of the holy Gospel of Christ, have all seen a dark and disastrous eclipse come over their fair prospects. What has happened to them heretofore, will unquestionably be experienced by others placed in the same circumstances hereafter, unless some speedy and effectual remedy, some means of averting the evil be provided. But against the foe to human happiness of which we are now speaking, we have but a single means of security. Our only safety is in flight. Some of my hearers may think themselves secure : that *they* can come into contact with the flame without being burnt—the man who collects their bones after the conflagration is over, commits them to the earth, and sits down to write their epitaph, will tell another tale.

In other cases, mankind have long since seen and acknowledged their weakness, and provided a remedy for it. The history of nations has demonstrated, that it is unsafe to trust any being born of a woman with absolute and unlimited power. For though that power may be employed virtuously and for the advantage of others for a while, it fails not to corrupt the heart of its possessor, and become an instrument of mischief in his hands at last. Hence it is, that all wise and enlightened nations limit the prerogatives of their Sovereigns by constitutions and bills of right, and that in our own country, the power of the civil ruler is very accurately defined. The wisdom of this procedure: of preventing the mischiefs which human weakness would produce, since for weakness we cannot substitute strength in the human character, has been for some time fully understood and acknowledged. It is only recently, that the

necessity of employing the same methods against the evils of Intemperance has been felt, and those methods resorted to. The reasonableness of the remedial plans proposed by the friends of the Temperance Society, is therefore apparent, as also that they involve no considerable difficulty, or important sacrifice of interest or feeling, and that just in proportion to the extent in which they are adopted, they must be effectual. They have been supposed however, to be liable to certain objections, which will now require a careful consideration.

I. It is said, they are at variance with what is contained in the sacred Scriptures, where wine is spoken of as a blessing bestowed in love and kindness by the Deity upon man; in the use of which we are moreover warranted, by no less an example than that of Christ himself.

This objection admits of so very simple and obvious an answer, that it would not be regarded as worthy of the particular notice which under the existing circumstances, we feel bound to give it, had there not appeared in certain newspapers having an extensive circulation in our country, and the editors of which would doubtless claim that they should be considered as respectable publications, some very arrogant sneers at the Temperance Society, so connected with a reference to the sacred Scriptures, as plainly to imply a belief on the part of the writers, that the principles of the Society and the word of God are at variance. If this stupendous ignorance be found in men claiming to be qualified to inform the minds of their fellow-citizens on various topics of politics, taste and morality, it may safely be supposed, that there are plain, unlettered persons, in every congregation, who need information upon these subjects, and there is a necessity for shewing that the members of the Temperance Society have *not* gone to work to improve the code of morals contained in the Bible.

It is granted then, that the temperate use of wine is warranted by what we find in that holy book. I shall cite only a few of the more remarkable passages. Wine was one of the offerings which the Israelites were required by the Levitical law to present daily at the altar of their God.

“Now this is that which thou shalt offer upon the altar, two lambs of the first year, day by day continually, and with each the fourth part of a hin of wine for a drink offering.” *Exodus* xxix, 36. In the 104th *Psalms*, it is said of God, that “he causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man, that he may bring forth fruit out of the earth, and wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man’s heart.” The first of the miracles wrought by Jesus of Nazareth, was that of turning water into wine, that a marriage feast might be celebrated in a suitable and proper manner. He was afterwards, in the course of his ministry, in the practice of drinking wine occasionally, and as he himself declares, was reproached by his enemies on that account. “For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and ye say he hath a devil. The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and ye say, behold a gluttonous man and a wine-drinker, a friend of publicans and sinners.” Finally, Paul recommends wine to Timothy, his fellow disciple and evangelist, in the words of our text: “Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake, and thine often infirmities.”

These passages, the friends of Temperance and Temperance Societies have no wish to keep out of view. They have no occasion for concealment of any kind, and are perfectly willing that the texts which appear to make most strongly against them should stand in the front of the battle. We remark, in reply to the objection, that the Temperance Societies are few in number, and it is believed there are none in North-Carolina, whose constitutions require of their members abstinence from wine. It is the use of *ardent* or *distilled spirits*, that is prohibited. If any one shall pretend to say that this is a captious and frivolous distinction, the contrary may easily be made to appear.

The juices of many fruits have the property, when separated from the tough and tasteless pulp in which they are contained, of undergoing a total change in many of

their properties, and especially in their action upon the living animal frame. They pass through the process of fermentation, and from sweet and inert liquids, become capable of producing a high degree of excitement in the system. When an intoxicating liquor is procured from the grape, we call it wine. But besides the grape there are many other substances from which it may be obtained; indeed there is hardly any vegetable matter that is used for food, which will not afford it. When derived from grain of any kind, it takes the name of beer or ale; when from honey sodden in water, it is called mead. How many different liquors of this kind the ancient Hebrews were in the practice of forming we do not know, but whether numerous or few, they seem to have all been classed under the single denomination of *strong drink*. These two therefore, wine and strong drink, both of them the products of simple fermentation, were the only intoxicating liquors known in the world before the canon of Scripture was closed and the last Apostle slumbering in his grave. Neither of them was much stronger; (especially when manufactured in a rude way by a simple people, and before the grape by long continued culture had arrived at the perfection in which it is now produced on the hills of France and Italy); than cider or ale.

From such substances as these, so long as the method of procuring any thing more stimulating and powerful was unknown, but little danger was to be apprehended. To induce intoxication, they must be taken in such quantities into the stomach: they create, as I am informed by those who have made the trial, a sickness so distressing that there is little desire of experiencing their operation a second time. Though persons might be found therefore in the land of Judea, from the time of Moses to that of Jesus Christ, who would be guilty of the sin of drunkenness, just as there are men in every country who will abuse the blessings of food and sleep and be sluggards and gluttons; the mischiefs of Intemperance were inconsiderable, compared with what they are at the present day. The use of wine, with a moderate degree of caution and prudence, was safe.

There was little danger that an unnatural appetite for it would be created, especially as in a populous country, but a small extent of territory could be devoted to its production. It was well fitted, on occasions of festivity and rejoicing, or after the fatigues of severe labor, to produce a moderate exhilaration; in the language of the sacred scriptures, to make glad the heart of man. It gladdened his heart without destroying the gentle and virtuous feelings there. Hence it was, that the use of it was sanctioned by the example of Jesus Christ, and recommended by Paul to Timothy

But in the wine and strong drink mentioned in the scriptures there are present two different substances. One is simple water, with a little insipid mucilaginous matter disseminated through it; the other is, that to which the intoxicating property is owing. Sometime after the canon of scripture was closed, it was discovered that one of these substances is more volatile than the other, so that if the mixture be boiled the portion in which the intoxicating property resides will rise first in vapour, and by means of a proper apparatus may be collected.

There is no science over whose history so deep a cloud of obscurity hangs as over that of Chemistry, so that we do not know even the name of the individual to whom we are indebted for the process of distillation. It is probable that it was invented sometime in the first century after Christ, but not one man in a thousand knew any thing of it, or its products, till many ages afterwards. So deep and general was the ignorance respecting it, that it has been supposed by some, that ardent spirits were first obtained from a fermented liquor by distillation, by a French chemist of the thirteenth century. It is only within the last two hundred years that they have begun to exert an influence upon the morals and happiness of mankind.

I have been thus particular in tracing the distinction in regard to their origin and history between distilled spirits and the wine and strong drink of the Bible, because that holy book is appealed to by the intemperate men of modern

times, as though it really sanctioned their excesses. The man who drinks his pint of *whiskey* per day, will quote the advice of Paul to Timothy; "Take a little *wine* for thy stomach's sake." There is in the scriptures no warrant for any thing that is condemned by the constitution of the Temperance Society. There is no warrant in them even for the use of the liquors that are sold in the shops under the name of wine, for all these have received, before being shipped from Europe, an addition of brandy to keep them from turning sour during their transportation across the Atlantic. And yet we must drink freely of them forsooth, because Paul recommended wine to Timothy. Is it not abominable in men to form a compound, such as was utterly unknown in the ages when the Scriptures were written, nickname it wine, and then plead the sanction of the Holy Scriptures for the use and abuse of it?

II. It is said, that we need the stimulus of distilled spirits to sustain our strength under the fatigues of severe mental and bodily labour, especially when we are to be exposed for a considerable time to the piercing cold of winter, or the fervid heat of summer.

To this plea for indulgence in the use of spirits, it is sufficient to reply, that they were unknown to the whole ancient world, in which it is nevertheless believed by many, that our race made its very happiest efforts in every field of enterprize. In the early ages, not less than at the present day, men engaged in the labours of agriculture, commerce and the arts. On them fell the task of subduing the then wild and savage earth, of intersecting it with roads, and adorning it with cities girt with walls, and strengthened with towers—of rearing temples to the Gods, many of which still remain to attest the labour, as well as skill and taste, employed in their erection. They built the mighty pyramids. They had, at the same time, as well as we, to compel the earth to yield subsistence for themselves and their children. These are the works of peace; the exertions they were obliged to make in time of war were still more severe. The Roman soldier took sixty pounds weight of baggage upon his shoulder, and made



regular marches of twenty miles a day, without repining. Thus equipped, he would pass one campaign amongst the snows of the Rhœtian hills, and the next on the burning sands of Numidia, and return with a cheek ruddy with health to his native home. An amount of labour and exposure, little, if at all, inferior to that endured by the Roman, was connected with the whole course of ancient warfare, by which the conquest of Canaan was effected under Joshua, David's victories achieved, the Assyrian, Persian and Macedonian Empires, in succession established and overturned, and the bloody drama of history brought down to within two or three hundred years of the present day. Through the long series of ages that witnessed these achievements, the art of distillation was either absolutely unknown, or practised in mysterious silence and secrecy, by here and there a solitary alchemist.

Nor did the mind in those ancient days, demand the application of stimulants, any more than the body. The orators of Greece and Rome needed not those aids and helps to eloquence, which our modern statesmen and declaimers employ. To the poet, the fervor of his own bosom—to the philosopher, the regular and natural operations of his own vigorous and unclouded mind, were fully sufficient for the production of those master-pieces of taste and wisdom which have been the admiration of every following age. The lips of Moses, the Jewish lawgiver—of David, the sweet singer of Israel—of the holy and sublime Isaiah—of the pathetic Jeremiah—*of the Redeemer of mankind*, were never polluted by the products of distillation.

Now I beg to be informed whether the earth underwent a great and disastrous revolution two or three hundred years ago? Did it then pass from vigorous manhood into a state of dotage, and do its inhabitants feel the effects of the change? How is it with our youth, the future pillars of the Church, in this our American Israel, and supports of the Republic through the following age—do they want the native vigour of their sires? Do their hearts beat so feebly, and drive the purple current in so cold and sluggish a tide along their arteries, that it has need to be warmed

with the cordials prescribed to our forefathers when nature was about to sink beneath the oppressive load of years? If not, if the earth produces and nourishes as perfect men now as she did in former times, then is the simple fact that distilled spirits were unknown to the heroes and sages of antiquity, an ample proof that there is no necessity for them now.

But the plea itself is founded on an ignorant and erroneous idea of the effect of spirits upon the animal frame. If it cannot be safely and truly said, that they convey no nourishment whatever into the system, it is at least certain that what they do afford, is too trifling and inconsiderable to be worthy of a moment's consideration, when reputation, health, happiness on earth, from whatever source derived, and eternal life itself, are at stake. It is not the kind of nourishment by which it was the will and purpose of the Deity, when he created him, that the life of man should be sustained. It is not a kind which can be taken, even along with our natural, proper and appointed food, without bringing down the health, bodily strength, and intellectual vigour, from the elevation at which they would otherwise have stood, and substituting, in a greater or less degree, physical weakness and mental imbecility in their stead. Let there be two men, whose age, occupation, and the general tenor of their life are the same, whose original constitutions were of equal goodness—one of whom is in the habitual use of ardent spirits, whilst the other drinks nothing but water—we may safely leave it for any one to say, which of the two will retain the greatest share of his native strength and vigour at the end of ten years. In how many cases do the squalid, sickly countenance and trembling hand of the man, who is from day to day under the influence of stimulants, but never intoxicated, betray his habits, without any need of a neighbour or acquaintance to tell his melancholy story.

Would you have an example of the natural tenor of the life of the race to which we belong?—look at a healthy infant subsisting upon that food which the wisdom of the God of Nature has provided for it. Its existence, so far as it

depends upon the nourishment it receives, flows on like a smooth and placid stream maintaining an uniform depth and rapidity in every part of its course. How different from this, is that unevenness and irregularity of feeling, the succession of excitement and languid debility, which is produced by intoxicating liquors. That man unquestionably lives most agreeably to the laws of nature and the will of the Deity, whose manhood is an image and counterpart of the unbroken tranquillity of his infant years. If we attempt to change this natural state of things, to awaken a wilder, fiercer joy within us, and by the aid of stimulants to keep the current of health and strength and vigour and animation, above its natural level—we attempt to improve upon the workmanship of Almighty God, and it requires no supernatural wisdom to discover what the result must be. Not only do we fail of accomplishing our object, but we do infinite mischief.

It is granted, that a man will accomplish his task (provided it be a brief one) and feel it the less—that his food will be more tasteful, if he is under the influence of stimulants to-day, but he will come languid to his labour, and the sensation of hunger will require to be roused by the same provocatives to-morrow. The amount of exertion and enjoyment of which he is capable within the compass of a week or a month, is diminished rather than increased at the time; the demand for a renewal of the unnatural excitement becomes, from day to day, and year to year, more and more imperious; the health and strength sink, fearful inroads are made upon the native vigour of the constitution, and the fatal appetite, that is strong as death and insatiable as the grave, is created. Spirituous liquors do not communicate strength. They merely accumulate the energy that should have been spread over a considerable portion of our existence, upon a single point, and exhaust it there. They place the system in an unnatural condition. They give a shock to the machine, which is not great perhaps in any individual instance, nor, if the material of which it is built be good, productive of any immediately visible bad effect; but which fails not, by being repeated, to create

derangement at last, and as in the case of any other machine, to accelerate the time when it shall be reduced to a heap of ruins.

III. There are some who do highly approve of all the objects and methods of the Temperance Society, and would lend it their cordial support, might they be exempted from the restraint it imposes upon its members *on certain days*. But that the birth-day of American freedom, or that which gave the Father of his Country to an admiring world, should pass unmarked by some demonstrations of social and patriotic feeling, and recourse to those means by which our festivities are easily enlivened, without drawing at all upon our hoarded stores of wit and humour, is what they cannot bear of with any degree of patience. Or perhaps they have a preference for the cold water method of celebration, but are unable to abide the sneers and sarcasms of such as pursue a different course.

We may remark to these persons, that if the men whose general conduct is marked by strict sobriety, shall deem it appropriate to heat their brains with intoxicating liquors on these occasions. people of looser morals will doubtless feel themselves warranted in going the whole length of an entire and silent intoxication; and we may enquire whether it be absolutely necessary that the 22d of February and the 4th of July, should be selected, of all the days in the year, for throwing the reins upon the neck of appetite, and shewing ourselves unworthy of the freedom, with the acquisition of which, those days have so intimate a connection. Is not such a distinction calculated to make them infamous beyond all others in the calendar?

It is an old-fashioned doctrine, as ancient as the days of Daniel, that "the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will." It was held by the sages and patriots of the Revolution. "An appeal to the God of battles is all that is now left us," says the "forest born Demosthenes," in that Address to the House of Delegates, by which the population of a neighbouring State was first roused to thoughts of resistance to the oppressions of Britain. It can hardly be necessary for me

to cite the closing words of the Declaration of Independence. "And for the support of this declaration, *with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence*, we mutually pledge to each other, our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor." May not a man calling himself by the name of Christian be permitted to hold, as those old patriots believed, that the Almighty Being, to whose even-handed justice they made their appeal, did watch over the destinies of the infant Republic, and enable our little bark to ride out the dreadful storm that howled around her? May he not be pardoned, if he refuse to dishonor the anniversary of our emancipation, by the transgression of His laws?

*Washington* was not more remarkable for the profound wisdom of all his determinations than for the blameless purity of his life. Throughout his long career, there appears no stain, no blot. All is consistent and correct. But had *Washington* appeared, I will not say the victim, but in any way or form, the patron and friend of intemperate habits and practices, how would his glory have been darkened and eclipsed. His name would never have been sounded forth through all the earth as that of the wise and good. The country is less indebted to him for his services on the battle-field, important as they were, than for the unspotted purity of his after-life, and the matchless pattern of excellence, in this respect, which he left to those who should succeed him. The day that gave him birth is worthy to be kept as an annual festival throughout this western continent. Fair rise the sun upon that morn, let no dark cloud obscure the day, let men then meet in peace and love; but, O let it not be profaned by foul intoxication, lest his afflicted spirit turn away, and weep over the degradation of the country that he saved. We do not object to festivities on these occasions; we only claim that they should be harmless. The children of a certain city in a distant part of the world, have been in the practice of carrying on their youthful sports on the top of a rock whose sides are precipitous and craggy, so that it is certain death to the unfortunate babe who happens to be jostled over the edge.

Besides this, the rock rises in the midst of pestilential marshes, and many sicken and die, poisoned by the noxious vapours and exhalations that hover round the spot. Some of the children propose at length, to remove their play-ground from the rock from whose top they look down from time to time, and see the bleaching bones of their companions, who have been crushed by being precipitated to the bottom. They propose merely to transfer it to a green flowery meadow, lying in a healthy situation on the other side of the city; but they are withstood by the others, and railed at as cowardly and fanatical. These are the members of the Temperance Society and their opposers.

IV. Some will say, "it is plainly expedient and proper, that the use of distilled spirits should be laid aside, but why not leave it for every person to provide in private for his own safety? Where is the necessity of forming Societies, and binding ourselves by promises and written obligations to abstinence?"

We remark, in reply, that we have no unreasonable and overweening fondness for this particular method of putting a stop to the mischiefs of Intemperance; and if the person who does not approve of the plan of forming Societies, will propose another, that shall promise to be both feasible and effectual, and liable to fewer objections, we will very cheerfully adopt his scheme of reformation, instead of our own. Only let the work be done, and we care not how it is done. An overgrown and cruel monster has been for years preying upon the community, and devouring year by year some thousands of our citizens—devouring them, but torturing them beforehand with sickness, poverty, shame and madness, and every other form and variety of suffering. We have all lent our aid in pampering his fierce appetite, and gorging him with the food he loves. But convinced at length, of the folly and wickedness of our conduct, some of us at least, have resolved to turn our hand, and attack this foe to human happiness, and destroy him if we can, and to call upon all such as are not indifferent to the sufferings of their fellow-creatures, to aid us in the good and holy work, and so he is really strangled and put to death, it is to us a matter of indifference how.

But there is no room for the hope of our being able to diminish, in any considerable degree, either in this, or in any other country, the mischiefs of Intemperance, except by the adoption of the particular method that has lately come into use of instituting Temperance Societies. Every other has been found unavailing. The voice of Nature's God has been heard, bidding men beware of the frightful whirlpool that has been opened in the middle of the voyage of life, but heard in vain. The drunkard is seen in our streets, with his history and an account of his present condition inscribed upon his forehead. "I entered life with fair prospects, had talents, an amiable disposition, character and a handsome property—I married a lovely woman, my children were well provided for, virtuous and happy—My neighbours loved and respected me. The fatal habit seized me, and all is changed—The vigour of my constitution is broken down—I am poor, friendless, dejected, a bad husband, a bad father, a bad neighbour—weary of life, yet fearful of its close." With this warning, written in living characters before their eyes, men become intemperate from age to age.

The Gospel of our Saviour Christ—that word of the living God, of which it is said, "that it is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and body," has been brought to bear upon the argument, but accomplishes little. Even in those congregations where the doctrines of Christianity are preached with plainness, truth and fervor, examples of the vice which is the subject of remark, are not wanting. The Christian Minister, as they have appeared thickening about him, has been ready to exclaim, in melancholy despondency, that the sword of the spirit that has been put into his hand to strike through the foes of God and man, has lost its ancient temper—that there is one form of human wickedness which it is incompetent to cut in pieces and destroy. But it has been suggested to him, at length, that it is not a want of keenness in the weapon that has been furnished him from the armory of the Lord, but his own want of skill in using it, that is the cause of his small suc-

cess. Instead of bringing forward those denunciations of the sin of drunkenness that are contained in the Scriptures, it is necessary to go farther back, and *it is the petition in the Lord's prayer, by which we beg that we may escape temptation, that demands attention.* The institution of Temperance Societies, is simply a scheme for removing the temptation to an excessive use of intoxicating liquors as far as possible from amongst us, and two motives are presented to induce us to lend them our cordial support.

1. The first is personal. Those who become members of the Society and faithfully observe the provisions of its constitution, place themselves beyond the reach of danger. They draw such a circle about them as the ancient sorcerers are represented as describing upon the sand, when about to summon into their presence a being from the invisible world. However wildly he may rage without, the evil spirit has no power to pass that boundary.

2. The other motive for enrolling ourselves amongst the members of the Temperance Society, is drawn from our regard for the welfare of our fellow-creatures. Granting that the step is not at all needful to our personal security, we owe it to the community of which we are members. The evil for which we seek to provide a remedy, has been increasing in magnitude during the last two hundred years. The nations are in the condition of a man with a basket upon his shoulder, into which one ounce ball after another has been thrown, until he cries out at length, that he must be relieved, or he shall be crushed. Will you refuse your assistance? It is in vain that we claim to have nothing to do with the business, and plead that the case is one where we are without responsibility. *We are responsible for the consequences of our evil example.* The orphan child whom you shall hereafter casually meet—whose features are unknown to you—who is fatherless, because his father killed himself with strong drink—---and motherless, because his mother died of a broken heart, may justly lift his little hand, and call the most High God to witness, that you are the author of his misfortunes, since but for your example, he would now be enjoying the bless-



ings of a mother's affection and a father's love. But his father heard you sneer at the Temperance Society, and commend the social glass, and thus, through your influence, was led into those evil courses which issued in his ruin. If another illustration of the truth before us and of our duty be called for, we offer the following. There is in a certain part of the country a ford in a stream that is always rapid and deep, and often swollen by storms. Every year a number of persons are carried away by the impetuosity of the waters, into the bosom of which they sink to rise no more. It is proposed to prevent these calamities by erecting a bridge across the fatal stream. It appears that the expence and trouble would be inconsiderable, but there are a number of persons in the neighbourhood who, claiming to be very kind and charitable people, refuse to lend their aid. Such a torrent is Intemperance, and such a means of escape do we propose from its dangers. Will you refuse the simple contribution of your name? It is true, that those who enter its waters and begin to feel the influence of the current, raise no loud, imploring cry for help; if we could trust to the song that is on their lips, we should perhaps be compelled to pronounce them happy. They are insensible to their danger; but it is not the less on that account, for smoothly as the stream may seem to flow at first, it ere long begins to rush forward with resistless violence, carrying its unthinking victims along with it, down into the unfathomable gulf of everlasting ruin.

V. Finally, it is said, that there are men of talent and distinction in the country, who stand aloof from the Temperance Society, and that their example may be safely followed.

The fact is admitted, the correctness of the inference is denied. We may remark first, that the number of this class of persons is rapidly diminishing. Our appeal is made so directly to the plainest principles of common sense, that few will hereafter be willing to hazard their reputation for either a sound understanding, or a feeling and benevolent heart, by attempting to make a stand against the Temperance Society.

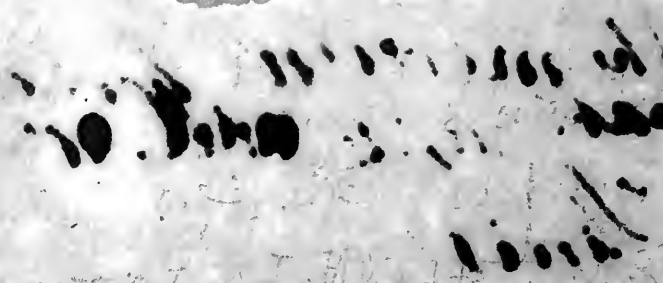
And secondly, if there has ever been, since the first settlement of this country, a generation upon whose failures, in regard to certain points of morality, it does not become us to look with too severe an eye, it is that which is now a little past the meridian of life. They grew up at a time when the whole order of Society was unhinged, and the frame of Government overturned to its foundations. Men's minds were too much agitated by the political troubles of the age, to permit them to attend with calmness to the education of their families. Many of the young men themselves entered the army, and there learned both the virtues and vices of a camp. What was suffered by the American soldiery in the wars of the Revolution, is, after all that has been written, but imperfectly known. Without tents, without clothing, without shoes, and therefore staining the ground with their blood, as they were marched to meet an enemy, always well equipped and provided for, and often superior in force, it was hardly to be expected, when we consider what poor human nature is, that they should not be willing, when an opportunity offered, to forget their cares in a temporary delirium; or that they should not bring back with them into civil life, the habits they acquired in the army. With regard to those who staid at home, and were engaged in agriculture, the case was still much the same. The husbandman committed his seed to the earth, in utter uncertainty whether the enemy would not come and let loose their war-horses upon his fields, trample down and destroy his harvest, burn his dwelling, and devour his cattle. He, as well as the soldier, was under strong temptations to turn away his eye from the future, and enjoy the present moment. Under these circumstances, it was to be expected, that a general relaxation of morals would ensue; that Intemperance would make fearful inroads upon the public peace and happiness, and that an evil influence would be shed down upon the next succeeding generation. In these facts, we find a cause and a reason, if not an excuse, for the unfriendly regards which some amongst us may be disposed to throw upon the Temperance Society.

But before we determine to copy the prejudices, faults and failings of the generation that is passing away, let it be distinctly called to mind, that there is a whole host of their redeeming virtues which never can be lost, or which, if we possess them, we shall never have the opportunity of exhibiting. Such were their unshaken firmness amidst the dangers of a cruel war, and their wisdom in council, when they were laying the strong foundations of our civil polity, and providing for the peace and welfare of succeeding times. The only virtues which it is in *our* power to cultivate, are those of peace. There is little probability that the generation now coming upon the stage, will be called to fight the battles of freedom. Nor in the walks of civil life, will it ever be possible for *us* to confer any great and distinguished favors upon our country or mankind. It is in the little circle of his friends and neighbours, that a man will have ability, and chiefly there by the influence of a good or bad example, to do good or evil. It is by a life of industry, integrity and temperance, that he must win an *honest* fame for patriotism and philanthropy. In the holy cause of Temperance, it does moreover appear suitable that such of the young men of the land as have been admitted to drink of the well-springs of divine philosophy, & for the improvement of whose minds the treasured wisdom of ages has been unlocked, and who have therefore resources and accomplishments denied to their equals in age, should be found in the first ranks; and not inappropriate that they should lead the way.

The Merciful God enable us to add "to knowledge, temperance," and her kindred graces, and our souls shall forever bless his holy name.

The merciful God  
enable us to add  
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*W. A. Patterson*

