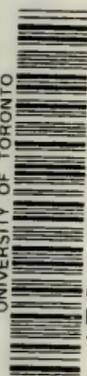


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Parallel between
intemperance and the slave
trade

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PARALLEL
BETWEEN
INTEMPERANCE
AND THE
SLAVE-TRADE.

BY HEMAN HUMPHREY, D. D.
PRESIDENT OF AMHERST COLLEGE, MASSACHUSETTS.



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A PARALLEL, &c.



THERE is a domestic tyrant now traversing the fairest districts of our country—consuming its young and vital energies; treading down the blossom of its hopes; undermining its free institutions; setting at defiance all its authorities; multiplying engines of torture; fencing off grave yards, and breathing pestilence upon every acre of our goodly heritage. This man-devouring shape,

“ If shape it may be called, which shape has none,

“ Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb,

— — — — —
“ Fierce as ten furies, terrible as hell,

is INTEMPERANCE. “ Other lords have had dominion over us,” but here is the very Nero of the horrid dynasty, and we must dethrone the despot, or we are lost. If we sit still but a little longer, and look quietly on, while this scourge is raging like a tempest of fire in all our borders, the fourth of July will indeed come; but we shall have no independence to celebrate. Our liberties will exist only in the song of the drunkard. *Fuit Illium*, (that THEY WERE,) will be written upon all the monuments of our glory.

I have long thought, that, in this state of things, a great advantage might be gained by comparing intemperance with some other terrible scourge of humanity which has fallen under deep and universal reprobation. Such a scourge is the African Slave-trade; and the position which I mean to take is this, *that the prevalent use of ardent spirits in the United States, is a worse evil at this moment than the slave-trade ever was in the height of its horrible prosperity.*

The bare mention of the slave-trade is enough to excite indignation and horror in every breast that is not twice dead to humanity. The wretch who should be accessory to a foreign traffic in human flesh, and sinews, and torment, would be branded with eternal infamy, if not hunted as a monster from the face of civilized society. And yet, I repeat it, *intemperance is worse than the slave-trade—is*

heavier with wo, and guilt, and death—both being “laid in the balances together.”

The principal ingredients of suffering and crime in the slave-trade, are, the infernal ambush—the midnight attack and conflagration of peaceful villages—the massacre of helpless age and imploring infancy—the stripes, and manacles, and thousand unutterable cruelties inflicted between the place of capture and embarkation—the horrors of the middle passage—the shambles prepared for the famine-stricken survivors on a foreign shore—the separation of husbands and wives, mothers and children, under the hammer and branding-iron—the mortality of *seasoning*, amid stripes, and hunger, and malaria:—to which must be added, the dreadful accumulation of heart-breaking remembrances and forebodings, incident to a state of hopeless bondage of themselves and their posterity, in a strange and hated land.

And can any thing be worse? Can any guilt, or misery, or peril, surpass that of the slave-trade? Yes, I answer, intemperance in the United States is worse, is a more blighting and deadly scourge to humanity, than that traffic, all dripping with gore, which it makes every muscle shudder to think of.

First; look at the *comparative aggregate of misery*, occasioned by the slave-trade on one hand, and intemperate drinking on the other. The result of this comparison will obviously depend upon the number of victims to each, the variety, intensity, and duration of their sufferings, bodily and mental; together with the degree and extent to which their friends and relations are made to suffer on their account. I am aware that the parallel does not admit of mathematical precision; neither does the nature of the argument require it.

To begin, then, with the *number* of victims on both sides, as nearly as it can be ascertained. According to Mr. Clarkson, and other good authorities, not far from 100,000 slaves have been shipped from the coast of Africa in a single year. This was the estimate for 1786; and of these, about 42,000 were transported in British vessels. The period in question, however, was one of the most afflictive and disgraceful activity; when the English, French, Dutch, Portuguese, and Danes, seemed most eagerly to vie with

each other in driving the infernal traffic. Probably, the average shipment of slaves for twenty years, immediately preceding the act of abolition by the British Parliament, may have ranged from *seventy to seventy-five thousand*. What proportion fell to our share it is difficult, perhaps impossible, to determine. But when it is considered how many other great markets were then open, we can hardly suppose that more than 25,000 were consigned to the United States. My own belief is, that the average did not exceed 20,000; but, to make the case as strong as it will bear against the slave-trade, let the number be raised to 30,000; making an aggregate of 150,000 in five years, or 300,000 in ten years. What a multitude of men, women, and children, to go into captivity, and wear the yoke of slavery for ever!

But we must follow these miserable beings a step further, and inquire for them in the bills of mortality. According to the most authentic estimates which I have been able to find, the number of deaths, during the middle passage, varies from *six to fifteen* per cent. In some extraordinary cases it has gone up to *thirty*, or even higher. But the average, taking one year with another, may be put down at ten, or twelve deaths in a hundred, before the slaves reach the great shambles, to which, like beasts of burden, they are consigned. Suppose, then, that our share in the infamous traffick cost from *three to four* thousand lives annually in the middle passage, and from *eight to ten* thousand more in the two first years of servitude. This, indeed, must have been, considering the cause of it, a most horrible mortality.

But let us inquire whether at least as many thousands are not now enslaved and destroyed by a more ruthless enemy of happiness and of life. According to the recent calculations of Mr. Palfrey and others, which I believe an exact census would more than verify, *thirty-six thousand* new victims are yearly snared, and taken, and enslaved by strong drink. *Thirty-six thousand* perish by the hand of this fell destroyer, and of course it requires an equal number of fresh recruits to keep the drunkard's knell still sounding through the land.

The parallel, then, as nearly as it can be ascertained, stands thus. Shipment of slaves. say in 1786, from *twenty-*

five to thirty thousand. Brought into a worse bondage, by intemperance, in 1828, *thirty-six thousand.* Deaths by the slave-trade, from *ten to fifteen thousand*—by ardent spirits, *thirty-six thousand!* Thus, where the slave-trade opened *one grave*, hard drinking opens *three.*

Again; as intemperance holds this “bad pre-eminence” over the slave-trade in point of *numbers*, so I am persuaded it does in the aggregate of human *misery* which it inflicts.

Go, then, with me to that long-abused continent, where the first act of this infernal tragedy is acted over every month, and you will gain some faint idea of the atrocities which it unfolds. In that thicket crouches a human tiger; and just beyond it you hear the joyous voices of children at their sports. The next moment he springs upon his terrified prey—nor sister nor mother shall ever see them more. On the right hand you hear the moans of the captive, as he goes bleeding to his doom; and on the left, a peaceful village flashes horror upon the face of midnight; and as you approach the scene of conflagration, you behold the sick, the aged, and the infant, either writhing in the fire where they lay peacefully down; or, attempting to escape, you see them forced back into the flames, as not worth the trouble of driving to market. And then, O what shrieks from the bursting hearts of the more unhappy survivors! What agonies in the rending of every tie! What lacerations, what fainting, what despair, wait on every step, and afflict the heavens which light them on their way to bondage! How many would die, if they could, before they have been an hour in the hands of those incarnate dæmons who are hurrying them away!

Shall I attempt to describe the horrors of the *middle passage*—the miseries which await these wretched beings in crossing the ocean? I have no pencil, nor colors for such a picture. But see them literally packed alive, by hundreds, in a floating and pestilential dungeon—manacled to the very bone, under a treble-ironed hatchway—tormented with thirst, and devoured by hunger—suffocated in their own breath—chained to corpses, and maddened by despair to the rending of all their heart-strings. See mothers and young girls, and even little children, seeking refuge in the caverns of the deep, from the power of their tormentors; and not to be diverted from their purpose by

the hanging and shooting of such as have failed in similar attempts. Behold the sick and the blind struggling amid the waves into which avarice has cast them, and shrieking, in the jaws of the shark, for the unpardonable crime of having sunk under their tortures, and lost their marketable value on the voyage. See them headed up in water-casks, and thrown into the sea, lest they should be found and liberated by the merciful cruiser.

The foregoing is a mere extract from the blood-stained records of the slave-trade. Who then will undertake to sum up the amount of human misery which is wafted by the reluctant and wailing winds upon the complaining waters, to be chained and scourged, to pine and die in the great western house of bondage?

But while intemperance mixes ingredients equally bitter in the cup of trembling and wo which it fills up to the brim, it casts in others, which the slave-trade never mingled—for it fetters the immortal mind as well as the body. It not only blisters the skin, but scorches the vitals. While it scourges the flesh, it tortures the conscience. While it cripples the wretch in every limb, and boils away his blood, and ossifies its channels, and throws every nerve into a dying tremor, it also goes down into the unsounded depths of human depravity, and not only excites all the passions to fierce insurrection against God and man, but kindles a deadly civil war in the very heart of their own empire.

Who can enumerate the diseases which intemperance generates in the brain, liver, stomach, lungs, bones, muscles, nerves, fluids, and whatever else is susceptible of disease, or pain, in the human system? How rudely does it shut up, one after another, all the doors of sensation; or, in the caprice of its wrath, throw them all wide open to every hateful intruder! How, with a refinement of cruelty almost peculiar to itself, does it fly in the face of its victims, and hold their quivering eye-balls in its fangs, till they abhor the light and swim in blood!

Mark that carbuncled, slaving, doubtful remnant of a man, retching and picking tansy before sunrise—loathing his breakfast—getting his ear bored to the door of a dram-shop an hour after—disguised before ten—quarrelling by dinner time; and snoring drunk before supper. See him next morning at his retching, and his tansy again; and, as

the day advances, becoming noisy, cross, drivelling, and intoxicated. Think of his thus dragging out months and years of torture, till the earth refuses any longer to bear such a wretch upon its surface, and then tell me, if any Barbadian slave was ever so miserable.

But who is this that comes hobbling up, with bandaged legs, inflamed eyes, and a distorted countenance? Every step is like the piercing of a sword, or the driving of a nail among nerves and tendons. And what is the cause? The *humors*, he tells us, trouble him; and though he has applied to all the doctors far and near, he can get no relief. Ah, these wicked and inveterate humors! Every body knows where they came from. But for the bottle, he might have been a sound and healthy man. He may live as long, possibly, as he would in a sugar-house at Jamaica; but to grind more miserably in the prison which he has built at his own expense, and in manacles which his own hands have forged.

Look next at that wretched hovel, open on all sides to the rude and drenching intrusion of the elements. The panting skeleton, lying, as you see, upon a little straw in the corner, a prey to consumption, was once the owner of yonder comfortable mansion, and of that farm so rich in verdure and in sheaves. He might have owned them still, and have kept his health too, but for the love of strong drink. It is intemperance which has consumed his substance, rioted upon his flesh and his marrow, and shortened his breath, and fixed that deep sepulchral cough in his wasting vitals. Was ever a kidnapped African more wretched in his Atlantic dungeon? But your sympathies come too late. Perhaps you sold him the very poison which has brought him to this—or it went out sparkling from your distillery to the retailer, and thence into the jug, half concealed by the tattered garment of the victim, as he carried it home to his starving family.

Go next to the almshouse, and tell me whether you recognise that dropsical figure, lingering, from week to week, under the slow torments of strangulation. How piercing are his shrieks, as if he was actually drowning. He was once your neighbor, thrifty, reputable, and happy—but he yielded to the blandishments of the great destroyer. He drank, first temperately, then freely, then to excess, and finally,

to habitual inebriation. The consequences are before you. The swelling flood in which he catches every precarious breath, no finite power can long assuage. The veriest wretch, chained and sweltering between decks in a Portuguese Guineaman, is not half so miserable.

Leaving him to be cast a wreck by the angry waters upon the shore of eternity; enter that hut, toward which a solitary neighbor is advancing with hurried steps. There a husband and a father is supposed to be dying. The disease is *delirium tremens*. Every limb and muscle quivers as in the agonies of dissolution. Reason, having been so often and so rudely driven from her seat by habitual intoxication, now refuses to return. Possibly he may be reprieved, to stagger on a little further into his ignominious grave; but who that is bought and sold, and thrown into the sea, for the crime of being sable and sick, suffers half so much as this very slave?

In passing the Insane Hospital, just look through the grated window, at the maniac in his strait-jacket—gnashing his teeth, cursing his keepers, withering your very soul by the flashes of his eye, disquieting the night with cries of distress, or more appalling fits of laughter. Here you see what it is for the immortal mind to be laid in ruins by the worse than volcanic belchings of the distillery, and what happens every day from these Tartarean eruptions.

“Who hath wo? Who hath sorrow? Who hath contentions? Who hath babbling? Who hath wounds without cause? Who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine.” Strong drink may exhilarate for a moment, but “*at the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.*” And can any slave-torture be more excruciating than this? Glance your eye once more at the poor African captive—trace his bloody footsteps to the ship—let your sympathies all cluster round the sufferer in the middle passage, so proverbial for its horrors—follow him thence to the plantation, and thence, through years of toil and pain, to his refuge in the grave. Then look again at the self-immolated victim of intemperance—hobbling—ulcerated—bloated—cadaverous—fleshless—every nerve, and muscle, and sensitive organ of his body quivering in the deadly grasp of

some merciless disease, occasioned by swallowing the fiery element. Follow *him*, too, through the *middle passage* from health, and freedom, and happiness, to all the woes of habitual intoxication; and thence through scenes of the most grinding and crushing bondage that ever disgraced and tortured humanity, to his final rotting-place, and tell me which of these slaves suffers most.

Shall I speak of *shame*, as prolific of mental suffering? What has the manacled and starving captive done to be ashamed of? He fought for liberty as long as he could, or he fled from bondage with his utmost speed. But look at the intemperate man. No one can become a sot and a reprobate without suffering extreme mortification, especially in the early stages of his downward course. Indeed the veriest drunkard, even when half intoxicated, evidently despises himself from the bottom of his heart. A hundred times in a year does he wish himself dead, from mere self-contempt. From the public gaze, as you have often seen, he tries to skulk away to some horse-shed, or other place of concealment. For days together, after a debauch, he shuts himself up to brood over his degradation; and when, at last, he ventures out, how does he shrink from the glance of every eye, and glide along by the wall, or under the fence, like a sheep-stealer!

In a still more vital point, the parallel entirely fails; for the suffering is all on the side of intemperance. Whatever *bodily* torture the slave may be compelled to endure, he has a clear *conscience*. He did not sell himself. He never lacerated his own flesh, nor plucked the bread out of his own mouth. Poor and half naked, indeed, he is, but not by his own fault. In bondage he must wear out his life, but he did not forge and rivet his own chains, nor thrust himself into the dungeon which conveyed him to market. If his parents died with grief after he left them, he was not the guilty cause of it. If his wife has sunk down by his side, with a broken heart, gladly would he have saved her, if he could. If his children are as wretched and hopeless as himself, it is not through his voluntary agency. Of all this guilt he stands acquitted at the bar of conscience.

But how is it with the bond-slave of intemperance? What tormentor was ever so fierce and relentless as a

guilty conscience? She charges him with the meanness of driving himself to market—of selling his own flesh and blood, for nothing, to the most cruel master—of *buying*, and, when his money is gone, *begging*, the privilege of being a slave. She upbraids him with the guilt of wasting his property, sacrificing his health, blasting his character, destroying his usefulness, disgracing his friends, violating his conjugal vows, entailing poverty and infamy upon his children, and ruining his own soul. When thus maddened by her whip of scorpions, he flies to his cups for relief, she but intermits her tortures to renew them the first moment that returning reason brings him within her reach, and scourges him back again to the very brink of desperation. Again he plunges, deeper than ever, in the oblivious flood, and again emerges, to feel the dreadful renewal of her stripes, and perhaps the next moment to rush into a burning eternity.

She knows how to make her terrible voice heard even in the midst of his revelry. She enters before him into his sick chamber, with thorns for his pillow—takes her stand by his bed-side, on purpose to terrify him with her awful forebodings and rebukes; and when the king of terrors comes, she anticipates his entrance into the dark valley, that she may there haunt his soul with undying horrors. Now what, I pray you, is African slavery, in its most terrific forms, compared with this? The mere sting of an insect, compared with the fangs of a tiger—the slight inconvenience of a ligature, contrasted with the crawling and crushing folds of the Boa Constrictor. Drag me, bound and bleeding, if you will, from my blazing habitation—thrust me half dead into the fetid hold of any slave-ship—sell me to any foreign master—doom me to labour in any burning climate—set over me any iron-hearted driver—load me with any chains, and compel me to toil night and day in any sugar-house;—but deliver me not over to the retributions of a conscience exasperated by the guilt of intemperance! O bind me not to a rack where I can neither live nor die under the torture!

Again; it is demonstrable that intemperance inflicts *more misery* upon the immediate friends and relatives of its victims in this country, than was ever caused in Africa, by our participation in the slave-trade. I have alluded

already to the cruelty of the lucre-bitten prowler, in sending down multitudes of parents, sorrowing, and childless, to their graves; and to the bloody conflagration in which the helpless perish, at the moment when their dearest friends are swept into hopeless captivity. But, to say nothing of the keener sensibilities of a civilized than of a savage state, can it be doubted, that the anguish occasioned by the intemperance of husbands, sons, and brothers, is more acute, or that it afflicts a still greater number of families? When you have poured out your sympathies over a sorrowing mother, and her half-starved children, whose husband and father is pining in western bondage, enter the forlorn habitation of the thrice widowed mother of a drunkard's offspring. Or when you have wept with that aged pair, on the slave-coast, whose only son has just been carried off by the ruthless man-stealer, come home to America, and see the only prop of once doting and now aged parents, falling intoxicated and blaspheming, over the threshold of their door; and tell me whose breach is widest, whose sorrows spring from the deepest fountain? Much as I love my children, let them all grind in chains till they die, rather, infinitely, than become the slaves of strong drink. And if intemperance pours such wormwood and gall as this into the hearts of *four-hundred thousand* families, (and this is probably a moderate estimate,) what must be the mighty aggregate of misery which sends up its ceaseless groans to heaven from every part of the land!

Secondly, as intemperance holds a dreadful preponderance over the slave-trade, in the *sufferings* which it occasions, it is still more pre-eminent in the *guilt* with which it is stained. The criminality of trading in human flesh cannot, indeed, be computed. But in this guilt the slaves themselves had no participation. And probably not twenty thousand of our citizens were ever, either directly or indirectly, concerned in it at any one time. Whereas, in the case of intemperance, every slave is a criminal; and *two hundred thousand*, at least, are chargeable with all the guilt which is involved in wasting property, throwing away influence and reputation, abusing reason, rending asunder allied heart-strings, and kindling up fires which will burn to the lowest hell.

Can it be so criminal in the sight of heaven, then, for

ten or twenty thousand persons to hunt, and enslave, and kill the poor black men, as for two hundred thousand white men, to enslave, and torment, and kill, not only themselves, but their parents, sisters, wives, and children? If the guilt of the twenty thousand is crimson, what must that be of the *ten times twenty* thousand? If the sins of the former were *legion*, who will undertake to number those of the latter?

Thirdly; intemperance is, beyond all comparison, more destructive to the *souls* of men than the slave-trade. Diabolical as this traffic is, it seals not up the Bible, nor blots out the Sabbath, nor removes men from the "house of God and the gate of heaven." It hardens not their hearts. It sears not their consciences. They are not more likely to lose their souls in America, than they would have been in their native country.

But how much more terrible are the effects of intemperate drinking, upon the character and destiny of men, born and educated in a Christian land! If there is any evil which hardens the heart faster, or fills the mouth with "cursing and bitterness" sooner, or quickens hatred to God and man into a more rapid and frightful maturity, I know not what it is. And if there is on this side of the nether world, a broader seal of perdition than the confirmed drunkard has burnt in upon his own visage, I know not where to find it. Look at him as he was, and as he is. Once the law of kindness dwelt upon his tongue, and the social affections had their home in his bosom. He kept the Sabbath, read his Bible, instructed his children, went regularly to the sanctuary, and was, at times, "almost persuaded to be a Christian." But the fell destroyer came, disguised, at first, in cordials and sparkling holiday pledges, and side-board hospitality. Yes, the destroyer came, and dried up the fountain that diffused gladness around him, and kindled every malignant and wrathful element of depravity into a raging conflagration, and converted his throat into an open sepulchre, and banished the Scriptures from his sight, if not from his dwelling, and estranged him from God's house, and incased his heart in adamant, and launched him upon that headlong torrent which thunders down into the bottomless abyss. "Be not deceived. Neither

fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor *drunkards*, shall inherit the kingdom of God."

Fourthly; our free institutions are more endangered by the love of ardent spirits, than they ever were by the slave-trade, or than they now are by the existing slavery of the south. No true and enlightened patriot can think, without deep solicitude, of the jeopardy which originated in stealing, buying and selling, and consuming, human merchandise. Even the quiet servitude of two millions of people is a sleeping volcano, within the reach of whose smothered fires nothing can be entirely safe.

But how much more is to be feared from *two hundred thousand* veterans in the army of intemperance—not confined to any particular section or district of the United States, but quartered upon every town, and village, and settlement, in the nation! We encounter these mercenaries, in their uniform, wherever we go: and the power which they wield over the destinies of the country is tremendous. They are always found at the polls, and often stand as centinels over the ballot-boxes. They choose our rulers, and are chosen themselves to govern us. They find their way not only into the inferior legislative assemblies, but into the grand council of the nation. We meet them at the bar, in the jury-box, and even on the bench. They steal into the church of the living God; and, how shall it be spoken! the sacred desk itself cannot be effectually closed against them.

Is religion any thing more than a name? Do our institutions rest upon the virtue and intelligence of the people? Does every thing depend upon the purity of the elective franchise? Is almost every drunkard an elector? What, then, must the end of these things be? This question may be promptly answered without a prophet's ken. If intemperance should increase as it has done, and go on to corrupt the public morals, and set the laws at defiance, our government cannot stand. Its death-warrant is only waiting for the proper signature, and may shortly be read on the *fourth of July*. A sober people may possibly be enslaved; but an intemperate people cannot long remain free. They must have a master to measure out their rations, and keep them in awe at the point of the bayonet. And if the emblems of liberty are ever to be torn from our

banner—if her statues are to be hurled from their pedestals—if the car of a despot is to be driven over our suppliant necks, it will be by the aid of strong drink.

Of the enormous *expense* at which this Moloch of America is supported, and for which there never was the shadow of a parallel in the slave-trade, I shall say but little, both because my limits forbid, and because the topic is too familiar to need any thing more than a passing remark. But if our annual libations cost *forty*, or even *thirty* millions of dollars; then is here another proof, that intemperance is worse than the slave-trade.

Were our object merely to make out a strong case, or to prove that one great national curse and stigma is heavier and more disgraceful than another, it would be needless to enlarge. But who ever attempted to mount a battery, without intending, if possible, to rake the enemy's lines? A few rounds, at least, we must discharge on this occasion, just to try the calibre; and should any friend, or an ally, happen, at the moment, to be in the opposite camp, or somewhere between, in the range of our guns, he will do well to consult his safety, by hastening back to his post as soon as possible.

In the first place; if intemperance is more criminal than the slave-trade, and more dangerous to our free institutions, then what is the plain duty of our civil rulers? Is it not to discourage the former as well as the latter? Congress has no hesitation in passing the severest laws against the one, and why not do something to check the more dreadful ravages of the other? Why should the same government, which has cut up the slave-trade, root and branch, not only tolerate, but encourage the manufacture of a deleterious poison, which destroys an army of men every year, and which threatens the very heart of the body politic? While the importation of slaves is made piracy by our laws, in obedience to the united voice of policy, humanity, and religion, why should not the same voice prevail against the importation and manufacture of ardent spirits, at least so far as heavy duties can go to shield us from their ravages?

In the second place; if intemperance is worse than the slave-trade, then how ought a sober and moral community to regard that easy system of *licensing*, which fills our large towns with groceries and the whole land with dram-shops?

Would the authorities listen, for a moment, to any application for license to carry on the slave-trade, even if they had the power? No; they would spurn at it with indignation and horror. Let them look well, then, to the character and the number of applicants for liberty to retail the most insidious and destructive poisons. For it admits not of a doubt, that, in this way, more evil is done, more lives are destroyed, and more families are beggared, than would be by licensing a thousand small traders to bring home and sell the wretched children of Africa.

In the third place; if strong drink is a more dangerous enemy to our liberties, and the cause of more guilt and suffering in the land than the slave-trade ever was, what influence ought these considerations to have upon those who are engaged either in importing or manufacturing the poison? Would they send out their ships for cargoes of bond-men and bond-women? Would they think it right to raise as many slaves as possible for the market? No—they would shudder at the bare proposal. How, then, can they employ their capital, and personal services, to encourage and perpetuate the more dreadful slavery of body and soul to intoxicating liquors? I can believe that when John Newton commanded an English Guineaman, and before the guilt and cruelty of trading in human flesh had excited much discussion, some good men might have been engaged in the business. But the times of this ignorance are past—so that if, with all the light which has since been poured upon the atrocities of the slave-traffic, any one should continue in it, should own or navigate a vessel thus employed, or act as an agent or supercargo abroad, or build his stalls at home to receive the miserable captives, he would be justly regarded as utterly destitute, I will not say of religion, but of common humanity, and would bring down upon himself the indignant rebukes of an outraged community.

In like manner, I doubt not, that, in times past, men of the fairest character and of real piety have been large importers and distillers of intoxicating liquors; and this may be the case, to some extent, even now. But in full view of the estimates, and arguments, and appeals, which are going forth to enlighten the public mind, no conscientious man, I am persuaded, will be able much longer to own, or work a distillery among us. For how can he, who would indig-

nantly refuse to make hand-cuffs and iron collars for men and women of another continent, persevere in making a liquid poison, which is productive of far greater mischief and suffering to his own countrymen?

In the fourth place; if intemperate drinking is pregnant with more guilt, and misery, and political danger than the slave-trade ever was, how can it be right to retail spirits as a common beverage? Who is there, that, for the sake of a small and precarious profit, would burden his conscience with the guilt, and his character with the reproach of supplying the dealers in slaves with staples, and fetters, and ring-bolts, and padlocks, to carry on the accursed traffic? Can any man justify himself in dealing out strong drink to his customers, by the plea, that they *will* have it, and if he refuses, somebody else will supply them and take the profits? This very argument was strenuously urged in the British Parliament, against the abolition of the slave-trade. The demand, it was said, exists. The Colonies *must* and *will* have more slaves. If we relinquish this important branch of commerce, our rivals will carry it on, and reap all the advantage. Would any British statesman use this argument now?—"If we do not steal, and buy, and sell, and manacle human flesh and blood, under a little darker skin than our own, other nations will do it, and enrich themselves by the trade!" Would any enlightened and conscientious man in the world now reason in this manner?

But how, if the evils of intemperance are greater than those of the slave-trade, can any man permit himself to encourage the former, by dealing in spirituous liquors, while he would shrink from every participation in the latter, with the utmost abhorrence? I trust in God that the time is near, when our patriotic and conscientious merchants will no more vend ardent spirits, and pour out these streams of fire upon a suffering community, than they would sell arsenic by the pound, or retail hogsheads of nitric acid for the daily use of our families—when a respectable tavern-keeper will no more think of waiting and bowing in his bar, with a sparkling array of labelled decanters behind him, and the "black and blue ruin" before him, than of turning auctioneer in a Brazilian slave-market—and when no man of a decent character will any sooner stand

and mix liquors in a dram-shop, than he would use a red-hot branding-iron to fix the indelible stamp of servitude upon the flesh of a child.

In the fifth place ; if intemperance is more afflictive and disgraceful to humanity than the slave-trade, who can justify himself even in the moderate use of strong drink ? Would those respectable and influential men who drink sparingly, lend the weight of their example, for a moment, to perpetuate the slave-trade, supposing it had not yet been abolished ? Would they go into the market and buy at all ? Would they tell us, that, much as they abhor a wholesale traffic in human flesh, they see no harm in *trading a little* ; and that nobody can be comfortable without a *few slaves* ?

But wherein does this materially differ from what is so often and so gravely urged in favor of moderate drinking ? The man who takes his scanty rations, is extremely temperate in comparison with many others, it is true—for where *they* purchase gallons, *he* only fills his small decanter once or twice. What he does consume, however, is the same kind of poison which destroys its tens of thousands of lives every year. And so long as he buys the smallest quantity, for any other than medicinal purposes ; so long as he continues to drink at all, he lends the weight of his example to prolong the sorest plague that ever visited our country.

In the sixth place ; if intemperance deserves this character, and if the means hitherto employed to stop its ravages have proved unsuccessful, is it not the duty of every temperate man in the community to take a public stand against the common enemy, by a prompt enlistment in the service ? A popular excuse for declining is, “ I drink no ardent spirits, or very little indeed ; and I presume I never shall. Why then should I be urged to sign your paper ? What good will it do ? You have my example already, and you need no such bond as this to keep me sober.”

But if the slave-trade was now briskly carried on in all our sea-ports, would you say to the agent of an anti-slavery society, “ I purchase no slaves—I never embarked a dollar of capital in the trade, and therefore I see no advantage in giving you my name ?” No—you would subscribe at once, and you would consider it the duty of every man to do the

same. And why? Because union is strength. And ought you not, for the same reason, to unite with those who are now combining to save their country from the more dreadful thralldom of strong drink?

It is entirely in the power of the temperate and sound part of the community, by uniting, to drive the monster from our land. Those, therefore, who stand aloof from temperate societies, and leave their brethren to go on without them, are answerable to God and their country for every discouragement and hindrance which may accrue from their refusal. The measures now in train, for redeeming twelve millions of people from the curse of intemperance, cannot fail but through the criminal apathy of the temperate themselves. And shall they fail from this cause? Suppose it were equally in the power of the same class of men to remove the curse of African slavery from the United States, and they should leave it still to press like an incubus upon the heart of the body politic, and stop its pulsations, how would the benevolent universe regard such a dereliction of humanity and justice? With what indignation would a holy God frown upon it!

In the seventh place; if intemperance is so prevalent, so criminal, and so pregnant with misery and danger as has been represented, how can any man feel justified in laying his orchard, or his field of rye, or corn, under contribution to the distillery? A common excuse is, that oftentimes the farmer can find no other market. Then let him keep his produce. But the plea is not valid. The most that can be made out is, that his grain will sell for a few cents more at the distillery than any where else. And is this an object of sufficient importance to justify any man in becoming accessory to the ruin of his neighbors, by furnishing the means of inebriation? Who can believe that the staff of life was ever made to be subjected to the action of fire, and converted into a liquid poison?

Besides: what does the farmer gain in the end by the higher price, which tempts him to encounter the fumes and noxious vapor of Pluto's laboratories? * To fill his cask for family use, is almost a matter of course; and when he

* Or, as a shrewd foreign traveller, once, more appropriately styled them, "*the Devil's tea-kettles.*"

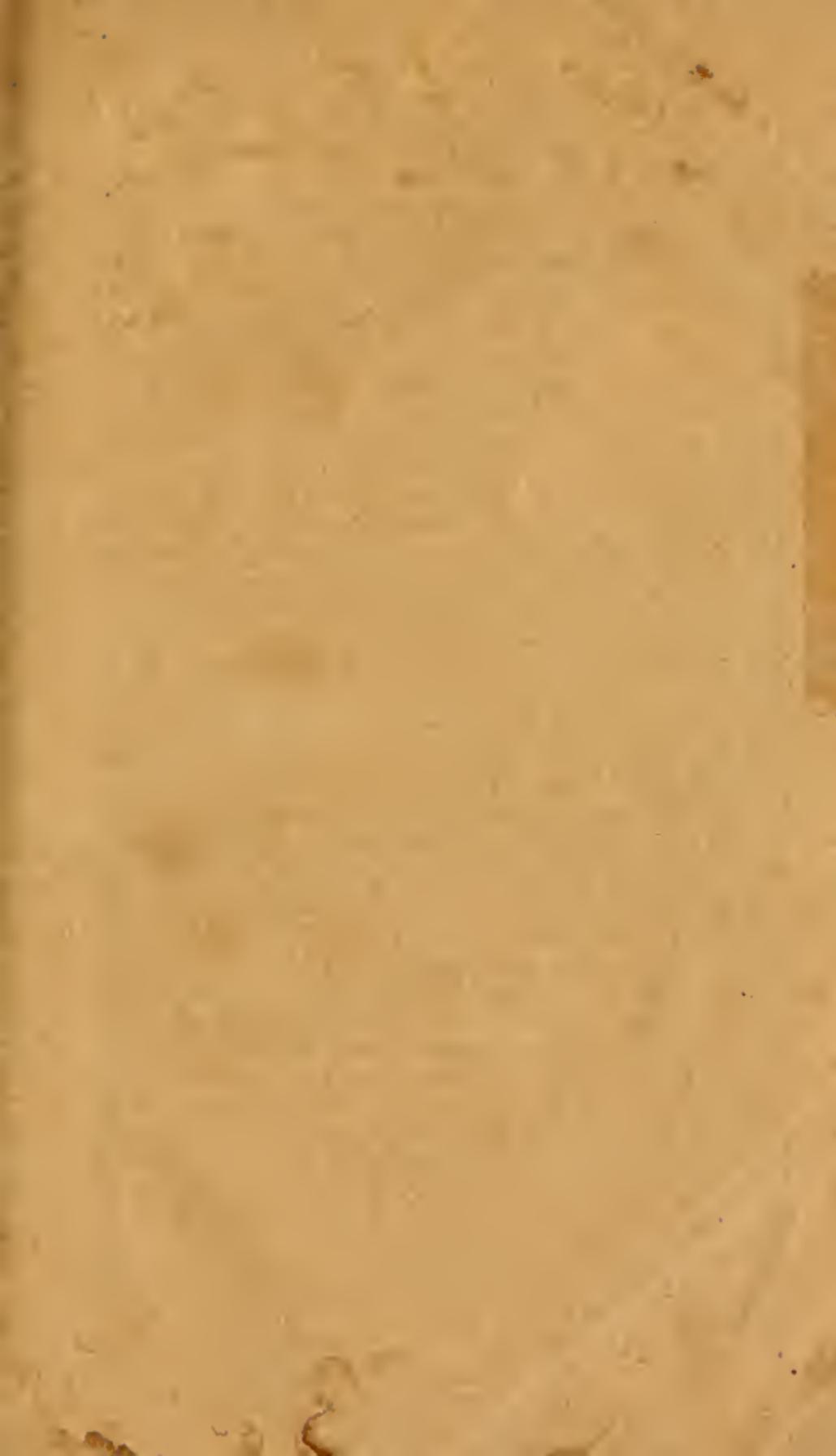
finds his children, one after another, becoming drunkards, let him tell the public how much richer he is for going to such a market.

Will the owner of a great and fruitful orchard say, "Providence has loaded every tree with his bounty; it is my duty, if possible, to save the product; and as there is no other demand, it can only be saved by sending it to the distillery?" So might the planter say, of his vast and luxuriant cane-field: "Providence has put this great plantation into my hands to be cultivated, and if I do not import more slaves, the bounty of heaven must be rejected and lost." It will be time enough for the thriving farmer to talk of gratitude and duty in converting his apples into brandy, when he has proved that his lands will produce nothing else; or that, if his fathers had planted an orchard of the *Bohan Upas*, and the demand for the poison were brisk and urgent, it would be his duty to gather and send it to market, though it should destroy the lives of thousands.

Finally; if intemperance is worse than the slave-trade, let every *Christian*, every *patriot*, every *philanthropist*, gird himself up to the great work of reform, and never cease from it till it shall be accomplished. A fearful responsibility rests upon the men of this generation; especially upon the influential and the temperate; upon the guardians and teachers of youth in all our public and private seminaries; and above all, perhaps, upon the *young men* of our beloved country. Let this responsibility be deeply felt; let union and perseverance every where be the watchwords of the sober and virtuous, and soon a drunkard will become as rare a monster as he was in the days of our *Pilgrim Fathers*; and posterity will look back upon the present ravages and toleration of intemperance with emotions of astonishment, grief, and horror, similar to those which *we* now feel, in reading the most afflictive history of the Slave-trade.

FROM
MR. BEMAN'S ADDRESS
ON
INTEMPERANCE.

LET not the temperate drinker depend upon the firmness of his own purpose. The man who drinks a little, and thinks himself in no danger, is almost sure to be ruined. That degraded man who is the sport of the boys, as he reels through the streets, or who lies all night under the fence, or who wallows in the ditch, once stood just where you now stand, and once felt just as you feel. The same may be said of the thousands and the tens of thousands who have destroyed themselves by intemperance, and whose names are rotting *above* ground, as fast as their bodies are rotting *below* it. I repeat the remark, there is no security but in the principle of entire abstinence. Let this principle be adopted, and the nation is saved; one of the broad avenues to hell is closed, and the gate of heaven is thrown wider open upon its hinges. If every young man in this city would come into this measure, it would be worth more than all its wealth and commerce. Let this principle be adopted by all the young men in our country, and this single movement would prove a richer blessing than the establishment of our independence. In a few years the land would not be cursed by the presence of a drunkard. And this subject ought to be deeply felt by the youth. Among young men, especially, intemperance is making sad and melancholy havoc. Those who commence hard drinking in early life, are sure to find an early grave. Intemperate children and youth rarely ever reach the years of manhood. In such cases, the work of death is short and rapid.



IF temperate drinking produced no direct evils to the individual, and involved him in no danger, every temperate drinker is now under obligations to abstain on account of the example. When Christ says, "Let your light shine before others, that they, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven," he makes every man accountable for the influence of his example; not only to do no evil, but also to do good by it. If any considerate person will look for a moment at the probable effect of universal abstinence among the temperate, he will see that it is his bounden duty to practise it. Even if it could be proved that a man derived some good, instead of evil, from drinking spirits, benevolence to his neighbor requires that he should give it up. For, every time a temperate man drinks, he gives license to the intemperate to drink. And when a man who yet retains firmness enough to govern his appetite sets the example, and offers the cup, why should not his less happy neighbor open the floodgate which he never has strength to close? The example of strong-minded men, who are restrained, by character and other considerations, from excess, ruins the great body of the weak-minded, the poor, and the desponding. The drinking of temperate people has hitherto utterly prostrated all attempts to rescue the intemperate from their ruin. We challenge the wit of man to bring forward a plausible plan for the suppression of drunkenness, which has not yet ready been tried and proved ineffectual, and on this ground. On the contrary, by temperate drinking, the evil is kept continually increasing. While the master lives and prospers, his apprentices and journeymen, copying his example, are ruined. Many a father has kept his bottle, and drunk his daily dram through life, in perfect sobriety, while his children, walking in his steps, without his self-command, die in his sight, of drunkenness. The case is known of a venerable minister, who always used to drink, by exact measure, about a third of a glass of spirits daily, alleging that a little was necessary, and that his appetite was such that he dared not trust himself, without knowing precisely how much he was to drink. He sunk to his grave with the character of a holy and spiritual man. By his children, and grand-children, and great-grand-children were, very many of them, ruined by following his example without his prudence.

HV Humphrey, Heman
5295 Parallel between
H84 intemperance and the slave trade.

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