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Intemperance Among Literary Men: An Address

J. Bannatyne

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INTEMPERANCE AMONG LITERARY MEN.

AN

ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE PORTLAND YOUNG MEN'S

TOTAL ABSTINENCE SOCIETY.

—●●—
BY J. BANNATYNE
—●●—

PORTLAND:

A. SHIRLEY & SON,.....PRINTERS.

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ADDRESS,

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE PORTLAND YOUNG MEN'S

TOTAL ABSTINENCE SOCIETY,

ON

SUNDAY EVENING, JULY 31,

IN

THE PARK STREET CHURCH,

AND

REPEATED, BY REQUEST,

ON SUNDAY EVENING, AUG. 7,

IN

THE FIRST PARISH CHURCH.

BY J. BANNATYNE.

PORTLAND:

A. SHIRLEY AND SON, PRINTERS.

1842.

A D D R E S S .

THERE are some vices so immediately and so terribly ruinous, that our censure of the immorality is almost lost in our commiseration of the suffering. And one of these is the vice of habitual intemperance, which is, in truth, a protracted suicide—an incessant war, waged by a man against himself, against his own happiness, against all his interests, both of body and of soul. He is punished almost in the act of transgression, and more severely punished at each repetition of the act, till at length misery—unmitigated misery—becomes his daily and hourly portion.

Now with this, contrast the case of the man who has devoted all his energies to the advancement of what he considers his interest; whose sole object in life is *self*, self-aggrandizement, and who, in the pursuit of this object, scruples not to employ the most atrocious means, if he can do so with impunity; hesitates not to trample on the rights, the interests, and the affections of all around him, regardless of the orphan's tear, the widow's wail, the *ruin* of whole families and neighborhoods, sacrificed to the Moloch of his ambition. This man, keeping all the while, it may be, just within the boundary prescribed by human law, (where there is ample room and verge enough for the perpetration of the foulest atrocities,)—*this man*, I say, rises to rank, wealth, and power, not only in spite of his vices, but by means of them; his want of moral restraint being the very groundwork of his success. And so, he flourishes like a

green bay tree, serene, and smiling, and supremely self-complacent, though he *be* a villain, and rotten to the heart's core, and descending to his grave perhaps without one pang of compunction or remorse for a long life of triumphant wickedness, unrelieved by a single act of generosity or virtue! Such men have been, and such men *are*, in the bosom of society;—and who will say that hundreds of unhappy inebriates, whom this man would spurn from his path, had not originally, and have not still, even in their deepest degradation, qualities of mind and heart which *he* could not even comprehend—warm and generous affections, sympathies large as the universe, and a vivid appreciation of the beautiful and the good, (from which they have so grievously fallen;) nay, we know that the very predominance of these social and mental qualities has often laid the foundation of that convivial indulgence, which has terminated so fatally. Such is the real character of these two classes of men, and such the equity of this most upright and impartial world—the former courted, caressed, and almost worshipped by the wealth-worshipping multitude; the latter, hooted from society, and left to perish in want and despair.

Alas! how many a noble heart has been thus undone, under that fell measure of retribution dealt out by a remorseless world! But thank God! the minds of men, on these subjects, have now most materially changed; and henceforth the lordly millionaire will not always repose, in triumphant security, on the fruits of his successful villainy, nor will the poor inebriate be longer excluded from society, and the sympathies of his kind. It is a most noble and Christian spirit which has at length dawned on the world, and ought to be promoted by all possible means.

In the present address, I will endeavor to give my feeble aid to this object, by calling your attention to the history and effects of intemperance among a class of men who have peculiar claims on our sympathy and regards, some of whom have been our intellectual fathers, the cultivators and the authors of our literature.

It might seem strange to speak of such men in connection with intemperance, did we not know that it is almost as indiscriminate in its ravages as the final Destroyer himself; sparing neither high nor low, neither rich nor poor, neither the amiable nor the unworthy, neither the enlightened nor the ignorant, neither the savage nor the sage. But there are circumstances, by which literary men of genius are exposed to peculiar peril. There is the *temperament* of genius—like an Eolian harp, tremblingly alive through all its chords to every impulse of the elements. If this temperament be accompanied with strong powers of volition, a vigorous faculty of self-control, it will be protected; and beautiful are the exhibitions of itself which it will then give to the world. But without this protection, there never was, perhaps, a more helpless or hapless being, in many respects, than the child of genius—a being less fitted to battle with the storms of life, while the crowning misfortune is, that there are none less frequently forced to the encounter. The poverty of genius is proverbial, and Virgil's address to the Bees—“*Non vobis mellificatis, apes,*” 'tis not for yourselves that you make honey—can never be better applied than to the enthusiastic artist or literateur, who, while the world is reveling in the honeyed sweets which he has gathered from the whole range of nature and art, and poured from the plastic cells of his mellifluous imagination, is himself too often doomed to drain the cup of wormwood and gall.

What is the consequence of these rude collisions of genius and contingency? The consequence is, a continual jarring between his fine strung spirit, and the harsh world in which he dwells, that keeps him forever on the rack. Hence the melancholy, that preys like a vulture on his heart, as if the unemployed energies of his nature recoiled with overwhelming fury on himself. The things that are, pall on his temper like a twice-told tale, and, sickened of all the world, he flies for refuge to the fairy visions of his own imagination, or, if these spontaneous enchantments fail (as they must often do), he will have recourse to *extrinsic* stimulants to rouse his drooping soul, and "gild the dreadful gloom with artificial light." Hence he often plunges headlong into the vortex of dissipation, to sooth for a while, in its maddening excitements, the feverish agitation, the intolerable anguish of his soul. Oblivion, enchantment, *intoxication*, is what he wants, and what he will receive in any form. And thus his life is spent in alternate ecstasies and horrors; and his mind, incessantly tossed between the wildest extremes, soon loses its tone and its equipoise, and rushes headlong to every excess; and though, amid the gloom that is gathering over his soul, there may be occasional gleams of visionary splendor, yet these are growing fainter and less frequent, till at length a night of unmingled horror closes around him, and he dwells in a universe of darkness.

The picture is terrible, but it is true. It has often been realized. And Oh! amid all the scenes of darkness and distress which this gloomy world exhibits, there is not to me a more appalling spectacle, than that of a nature so noble forever wrecked and ruined; and who can think of it, without a shuddering sense of the helpless frailty of our nature, the awful mystery of our present state,

and our unceasing need of a guiding and guarding Omnipotence?

This representation might be easily illustrated by reference to literary history in all ages; but it is sufficiently illustrated by the history of English literature. From the time of Queen Elizabeth, (when literature began to form a distinct occupation,) down to Pope and Swift, and the host of wits and poets, and wittlings and poetasters, who sprang up in that and the succeeding age, we find that they were for the most part a jolly and wine-bibbing fraternity; and too often overleapt the last restraint, and died the victims of solitary excess. Addison, like many men of his genius, had a slow and fastidious mind; and he loved, especially during the act of composition, to rouse it into energy by the use of wine.

But let us descend to a later and a more familiar age; where such men as Goldsmith—the felicitous Goldsmith—who adorned whatever he touched; Sheridan, that erratic but brilliant luminary, the unrivalled wit, dramatist, and orator, of whom it has been said, that in every thing he attempted, he produced the *best*; Byron, whom I need only name; Charles Lamb—the quiet, the quaint, the loveable Charles Lamb—who would not hurt a fly, though he so deeply injured himself; Beattie—author of the “Minstrel,” and the “Immutability of Truth,”—the amiable, the accomplished, and, in spite of his frailty, the pious Dr. Beattie; and lastly, (not to multiply examples) Burns—that noble peasant—who, summoned from behind his plough upon the mountain’s side, to the halls of gaiety and splendor, stood with brow unabashed, in presence of the noblest of the land, because he felt that

“The *rank* is but the guinea’s stamp,

The man’s the *gowd* for a’ that!”

and writing as he did in one of the provincial dialects of

a rude northern land, has had the rare privilege of being read and appreciated in every quarter of the reading world:—these, and many more in the same space of time, that have delighted and instructed the world, or that might have done so, had they not hurried themselves to an early and unhonored grave; all of these sought relief, in their intervals of despondency and exhaustion, from the waters of this false Helicon, and found in the end that they are the waters of death. Read the “Confessions of a Drunkard,” by Lamb, which were doubtless derived from his own bitter experience. Look at Sheridan, in the wane of life, overwhelmed by the sorrows and disappointments which he had brought upon himself—that powerful intellect which had been so gloriously exerted in the councils of his country, now racking itself for ignoble expedients to escape from duns and bailiffs, and all the indignities of debtorship—he—once the boon companion of Princes, as he was at all times the prince of boon companions, at length deserted by all, save a few humble friends, and left to die in abject misery, with scarce a blanket to cover him in his dying hour: alas! poorly atoned for by the empty pageant of his funeral procession, and the gorgeous array of crowned and coronetted carriages that followed him to his grave. Mark the gentle Beattie, after the death of his only daughter, attempting doubtless, to drown the agony of his bereavement in still deeper libations, wandering like a troubled ghost from chamber to chamber of his dwelling, and imploring his housekeeper to tell him whether he had a daughter or not. And lastly, turn again to our Scottish poet, as he was seen by a friend in the city of Dumfries, near the close of his melancholy life, walking alone, with feeble step, and downcast eye, on one side of the street, while, on the other side, a

boisterous party of his former friends were passing merrily along to some festive assembly, without deigning a glance at the woe-wasted Bard—*they*, “the grocerdom and grazierdom of Dumfries,” as Carlyle quaintly but indignantly describes them, whose names were never heard of half a mile from home, and *He*, with all his frailties, destined to become the immortal Representative of his nation’s Intellect, and to shine as one of the brightest luminaries in the firmament of fame ; read his desponding letters, and his penitential poems, in the prospect of death, and then follow him, step by step, in his darkening descent to the grave, in the very prime of a life, which but for himself might have been long and happy and glorious. Well may we exclaim, in view of these inconsistencies and frailties of our poor human nature, even in its noblest specimens—

“ How poor, how rich, how abject ; how august,
How complicate, how wonderful is man !
Thus centred in our make, such strange extremes,
From different natures marvellously mixed.

A beam ethereal, sullied and absorpt,
Though sullied and dishonored, still divine.
An heir of glory ! a frail child of dust !
A worm ! a god !—I tremble at myself,
And in myself am lost.”

I have introduced the subject of the intemperance of literary men, not only on account of the awful warning which their fate affords, to us meaner mortals, but because unfortunately there are many (*young* men especially) who, instead of being warned by their fate, are seduced by their example, or corrupted by their writings—the writings of those among them who have allowed their vicious propensities and habits to be reflected in their literary productions. This, it seems to me,

is a point which has been too much neglected, in the multifarious efforts of the Temperance Philanthropist. Such men could not fail to exert a most mighty influence, both on their contemporaries, and on posterity.

With regard to their contemporaries, it is quite evident that men of colloquial powers, like those of Sheridan and Burns, who themselves were so often seduced by this perilous accomplishment into convivial excesses, *must* have become involuntary instruments of seduction to others.

“Those flashes of merriment that ever set the table in a roar;” “that feast of reason and that flow of soul,”—who could resist the temptation of enjoying them, even though it should end, as it so often does in the extinction of reason, and the prostration both of body and soul?

It is related of Burns, that, if in travelling, he entered a tavern, even at midnight, not only landlord, but waiters and hostlers and all the hangers-on of the establishment, would get out of bed, and gather around to imbibe the witchery of that wondrous eloquence, which seems to have had equal charms, for the clown and the sage; for the high-born lady, and the humblest peasant.

We know the necessary accompaniments, and the usual termination of these scenes; and how could such a system of incessant and mutual seduction, be without its effects? Overwhelmed with invitations, waylaid by boon companions wherever he went; even the privacy of domestic retirement, invaded by crowds of inquisitive strangers, who must not depart without partaking of the poet's hospitality, (that is without tasting of his uisque-beatha) his life was one continued ovation of intemperance; and resembled an old electioneering campaign, or rather (if I may be allowed the comparison) it resembled the career of a modern revivalist, swelling the number of

his converts as he travels from place to place ; though *his* revivals were the revivals, not of religion, but of revelry, and his proselytes were converts, not to the gospel of Christ, but to the worship of Belial. The poet himself seems to have been deeply conscious of this, in his latter days, and it formed one of the bitterest ingredients in his cup of misery ; for, in addressing his young friends, he earnestly warns them against his own example, and his own fate, imploring them to follow the advice, but not the adviser.

But the personal influence of intemperate men of genius, during their lives, is not to be compared with the influence of their bacchanalian effusions, perpetuated by the power of the press, and the undying popularity of the authors. Let me not be told that these are mere intellectual toys, that may amuse for a moment, but pass away from the mind, at the first breath of sober reflection. I know it to be otherwise. I know it from my own experience, and from multiplied observation. I *know* that the Demon of Intemperance has been often so transformed and beautified, as to appear an angel of light ; and that multitudes have been lured within its deadly grasp, by the seductive trappings of wit, and eloquence, and social hilarity with which it has been invested by the hand of genius. It was a wise man that said, "Give me the making of a nation's ballads, and I will let any one make their laws." And what have our most popular songs and ballads hitherto been, but the very psalmody of intemperance ; in which, under every form of fascination, adapted to minds of all classes, conditions, and characters, with all the powers of fancy, with all the felicities of language, with all the charms of poetry and music combined, genius has labored to show how good a thing it is, and how

becoming well, that men should meet together, for the purpose of "putting an enemy into their mouths, to steal away their brains," or to steep them in forgetfulness, stupefaction and delirium. Nor has the task been found difficult. Men are naturally prone to excitement; and when the vicious gratification has, to appearance, lost half its guilt, by losing all its grossness; when the baser accompaniments have been thrown into the background, and the whole has been suffused with the rosiest atmosphere of a poetic imagination, it requires more than ordinary self-control in a young man of sensitive and social temperament, to resist the fascination. I remember when I first went to Edinburgh; I had been in the habit of reading Blackwood's Magazine, (which was then much more vigorously conducted than it now is,) and especially the *Noctes Ambrosianæ*, those brilliant caricatures by Professor Wilson; and such was their impression upon me, that I visited the scene of the nocturnal orgies, there described, with almost the enthusiasm of a devotee; and my fellow-students and myself, all equally bewitched with the voluptuous pictures—we forsooth! must have our *mimic* *Noctes Ambrosianæ*, our *cæna dæum*, our songs, and our speeches, and our flashes of wit and merriment, and our literary colloquies, enlivened by "potations pottle deep;" and I am persuaded that hundreds of young men, similarly circumstanced, have been ruined for life by this sorcery of genius.

There is a well known story by Mrs. Shelley, in which a German Student is represented as having devoted himself to inquiries and experiments, with the view of determining the principle of vitality, the secret source of sentient life. At length, he imagines he has discovered the grand secret; and, having moulded a mass of clay into an exact representation of the human body, he pre-

pires to make the final and daring experiment, of infusing into it the principle of life. The experiment succeeded.—The creature moved; opened its stony eyes, sprang up, and stood before him its human creator. But what was his consternation and horror to find, that this body, which he had moulded, and imbued with life, was now animated by the Spirit of a relentless Demon; and that he was the instrument, of sending on human society this dreadful being, armed with supernatural power and malignity, to scatter desolation through the world, without the possibility of checking its ravages, or of recalling the fatal gift, which he had so presumptuously conferred.* Precisely similar is the case of the man, who has sent forth on the world his melodious incentives to intemperance, sanctioned by his name, animated by his genius, and doomed to a desolating immortality. He has put in operation an instrument of destruction, to the extent of whose ravages he can assign no limits. Long after he has mouldered to dust, thousands of successive generations may have reason to curse his memory as the cause of their eternal ruin; and will rise up in judgment against him, a countless throng of accusers, at the final revelation of all things. Never shall it be known—said Cowper, the poet—never shall it be known till the day of judgment, what he has done, who has written a book: and, if every idle word that men speak, they shall give an account of in that day, what a fearful reckoning is *theirs*, whose “winged words” have gone forth to the world’s end, and will go down to the latest ages of time, depositing their influence, in every one of the innumerable minds, through

* I cannot vouch for the exact agreement of the above outline, with the course of Mrs. Shelley’s narrative, as it is long since I read her book, and I cannot now consult it.

which they are made to pass. It reminds me of that terrible passage in Milton, where the Archangel Michael, in his conversation with Adam, unfolds to him the future history of his descendents; and the Father of Men contemplates with horror the consequences of that primal transgression, which brought death into the world, and all our woe—the long vista of crimes, and diseases, and agonies, and deaths, which he has introduced into the beautiful creation of God.

* * * * * “Death thou hast seen
 In his first shape on man; but many shapes
 Hath death, and many are the ways that lead
 To his grim cave.
 Some, as thou saw'st, by violent stroke shall die,
 By fire, flood, famine; by intemp'rance more
 In meats and drinks, which on the earth shall bring
 Diseases dire, of which a monstrous crew
 Before thee shall appear; that thou may'st know
 What misery th' inabstinence of Eve
 Shall bring on men.” Immediately a place
 Before his eyes appear'd, sad, noisome, dark,
 A lazar-house it seem'd, wherein were laid
 Numbers of all diseased, all maladies
 Of ghastly spasm, or racking torture, qualms
 Of heart-sick agony, all feverous kinds,
 Convulsions, epilepsies, fierce catarrhs,
 Intestine stone and ulcer, cholic pangs,
 Demoniac phrenzy, moping melancholy,
 And moon-struck madness, pining atrophy,
 Marasmus, and wide-wasting pestilence,
 Dropsics, and asthmas, and joint-racking rheums.
 Dire was the tossing, deep the groans; Despair
 Tended the sick, busiest from couch to couch;
 And over them triumphant Death his dart
 Shook, but delayed to strike, though oft invoc'd
 With vows, as their chief good, and final hope.
 Sight so deform, what heart of rock could long
 Dry-eyed behold? Adam could not, but wept,
 Though not of woman born; compassion quell'd
 His best of man, and gave him up to tears.

What a fearful description of the effects of Intemperance! and how fearfully true! But is this all? is it only in the lazar-house, and the receptacle of bodily disease and pain that its effects are to be traced? Alas! what is the world at large but one moral lazar-house? from the thousand populous Babels that speck the bosom of the earth, what are the sounds which continually ascend to the listening ear of God? Is it the voice of gratulation and praise, from myriads of holy and happy creatures, towards their common Creator? Hark—to the roar of ribaldry and riot—hark, to the noise of rapine and slaughter—hark, to the horrible execrations and blasphemies, which, wherever human beings congregate, are heard by day and by night, like the revels and dirges of the damned, above all the harmonies of creation. And mark yon loathsome incarnations of depravity and wretchedness, that cast their shadows like a blight across every scene which they traverse. Oh, what noisome exhalations, are ever ascending to the pure and bright heavens from the putrefying masses of moral corruption which pollute the face of our globe. And if all the horrors which this earth holds were unfolded at once to our view, all its woes and wrongs, its oppressions and miseries, spread out in one appalling apocalypse before our eyes—*then* might we form some conception of what man has done to man, and of what man has done to himself, in marring the designs of a gracious God for the happiness and glory of his creatures.

Every man may be regarded as the centre of a circle, the circumference of which measures the extent of his influence, whether for good or evil; this circle varies in magnitude, according to the character and situation of the individual, but in some cases, for example, in the cases of the gifted individuals of whom we have been

speaking, it grows to a magnitude that embraces not only communities, but nations and ages, and the world. What may be the amount of evil that has been accomplished, or is now being accomplished, we of course cannot pretend to estimate, but knowing that the evil exists, it is surely our duty to enquire whether and how it can, by any possibility be remedied. We cannot banish this perilous literature from the earth, by any summary sentence of extramundation; we cannot place an extinguisher on it, or make a general bonfire of obnoxious books, as the Caliph Omar did of the Alexandrian Library—there they are, and there they will continue to circulate their influences through society; but cannot these influences be counteracted? Cannot they be greatly diminished, if not destroyed, by antagonist influences?

The only way of dispelling darkness, is by diffusing light. They that be drunken, said the apostle, are drunken in the night; and extending the phrase to moral and intellectual darkness, we might say, they that were intemperate, and wrought and wrote in the cause of intemperance, did so in the night of the world; that night is now well nigh spent; the day is breaking—it has broke—the shadows are fleeing away, and the true light is shining more and more unto that perfect day which shall finally put down all the works of darkness. Let the friends of temperance then continue to do, just what they are now doing, sending forth from a thousand centres of radiation through the land, the light of truth and experience on this important theme, and these auxiliaries of intemperance will soon become as innocuous if not as obsolete as the superstitious phantoms of a former age, or the mythological obscenities with which the pages of our most popular poets were at one time degraded. This light needs only to be concentrated on these inherited

corruptions of a former age, to strip them of the false hues and trappings with which they have been invested, and leave them exposed in all their naked deformity:— as the morning sun looking in upon a scene of midnight debauchery reveals the odious accompaniments and relics of the exhausted revels; chairs and tables overthrown, bottles and glasses shattered to pieces, and discharged with their reeking contents through the polluted apartment; and the pale and ghastly countenances of the prostrate revellers, who but a while ago were fain to believe themselves in the ecstasy of paradise.

These scenes of darkness will not bear the light. Have you ever been in a populous city on some lovely night, that seemed “not made for slumber;” and at midnight opened your casement, to greet the glorious scene, and inhale the hallowed influence of the hour, while the moon was walking in her brightness amid her golden retinue of stars, and the silvery clouds were gliding on like white-robed couriers through the sky; and the wilderness of houses and spires seemed almost to sleep in the holy light, and the mighty heart of the city, which soon would beat with all the pulses of life, then lay still and calm as death; and while you were wrapt in contemplation and breathless ecstasy, have you been startled by some noisy troop of revellers, “sons of Belial, flown with insolence and wine,” issuing from some haunt of infamy into the clear moonlight; and have you not marked how they suddenly paused, and shrunk into their habitations, or hurried like guilty things along the shadow of the street, as if they felt that a living Orb, the pure eye of God, were open and glaring upon theirs. Even so it is with all the works and workers of iniquity; they shrink and flee from the light, that it may not make manifest their hideous darkness.

Now it is cheering to the friends of temperance to

know, that such is now the state of public feeling on the subject, that no man would dare to publish effusions which twenty years ago would be read with avidity by all. This state of feeling must increase with the mighty social movement that is now going on, till our literature shall become comparatively pure, and the evils of which we have complained in the productions of genius, shall disappear from the earth, or be virtually dead. How can it be otherwise, amid that overwhelming revolution which is now inundating the civilized world? In this country alone its progress is almost incredible. From every pulpit and press in the land, from every school-house, from every fireside and social circle, from the corners of your streets, from your stores, and dock-yards, and places of resort, whether for business or pleasure, the universal cry is, Temperance—Temperance. Not only old men and matrons, and young men and maidens, but children of the tenderest age, are taught to repeat this watch-word of their liberty. I question whether there ever was a subject, not political or pecuniary, on which, in the same space of time, so much has been written, spoken, and done, as on the subject of temperance, within the last few years, in these United States; and almost all on one side, too; the most cordial unanimity; even party spirit, that wriggles itself into every other subject, cannot obtain a foothold here: and such is the deluge of temperance light now pouring in upon society from every point of observation and experience, that by and bye, like the natural day-light, described by Shakspeare,

“It was a garish, broad, and peering day
Light, loud, suspicious, full of eyes and ears,
And every little corner, hole, and nook,
Was penetrated by the insolent light—”

I say, in this universal illumination, there will not be left a single cleft of the rock, or cave of the earth, or den in

the deepest sinks of pollution ; not a single nook or corner of the land, in which Intemperance can hide his diminished head. What a revolution is this ! there has been nothing like it in the history of the world, at least since the days of the apostles. What are political revolutions in comparison ? *There* the minds of men are already prepared, and they have only to be roused by the rushing of some mighty wind in the political atmosphere, to put forth their united strength, and the victory is won. But here, it was the minds of men themselves that were to be revolutionized : each man had to effect a revolution in himself, and to establish his own personal independence ; and if it be true that he that subdues himself is greater than he that taketh a city, then I say that ten thousand revolutions, ten thousand thrones of hoariest despotism shattered to their base, ten thousand free and independent States springing into existence, have altogether less of moral sublimity than the spectacle of millions of immortal beings spurning away the shackles of a more degrading thralldom, and declaring themselves in the sight of God and men—in the face of the universe declaring themselves to be—*free*.

But who can estimate the results to society of this great consummation ! This cannot be done by glancing abroad on the surface of a moralized community, nor even by witnessing the renovated aspect of the reformed inebriate's dwelling, and the shining faces of his wife and children : but go into the bosom scenes of domestic life, and find how many a heart it has gladdened and blessed, which had never come into direct contact with the evils of intemperance. Behold, for example, the mother gazing fondly on the beautiful boy that slumbers on her lap, and seems to her a yet untainted bud of Paradise ; picturing his passage forth through the precarious scenes of life, hoping to live and see him virtuous and

happy ; willing then to die. But alas, how many a cloud had hitherto come over her spirit, as she thought of the temptations and perils to which youth is exposed in this treacherous world ; and especially that Arch temptation of profligate society, and of a profligate literature, that beset him on every side. But now how is the mother's heart lightened ; how many an anxious day and sleepless night is spared her, as she sees the path cleared, and the Giant-tempter slain ; and she can now cheerfully send forth her stripling son to the active duties of life, believing that by the blessing of God her fondest hopes will be more than realized :—what a blessing to the mother is the temperance reform, what a flame has it lighted in the lone widow's heart ! Such scenes as these, adorning in myriads the retirements of life, would form a picture of the effects of intemperance suppressed both in literature and society, which poets would delight to paint, and which angels would love to gaze upon.

May I be permitted, before concluding this address, to make a few general remarks on the spirit of the Temperance enterprise ? We have spoken much of the diffusion of knowledge on this subject, but we know well the practical part of the work is not to be accomplished by knowledge alone. If the inebriate is to be effectually reformed, it must be by the spirit of Christian love—of brotherly kindness—the only door by which one man can enter the heart of another, and leave his blessing there. Never was this truth more strikingly illustrated than in the progress of the temperance reform. It has sometimes appeared to me that one of the designs of Providence in this great work, besides its immediate results to society, was the Divine vindication of Christian principle, in answer to the often reiterated and taunting interrogatory of the infidel, “What good has Christianity done to the world, after eighteen hundred

years of its existence?" If Christianity had done no other good than this, which our eyes have seen, and our ears have heard, and our hearts have experienced; if it had lain dormant and dead for eighteen hundred years—a most glaring untruth—and had only awoke in these latter days, to work out this great salvation, this alone would have proved it not unworthy of having come from God, and having been brought by Christ, and having been given to men as the greatest boon which a God could confer on his guilty creatures. Lest I should be thought to exaggerate in speaking thus of the temperance reform, let it be remembered that its object is the extinction of intemperance, not as one of the vices or evils of society, but as the parent of all vice and of all misery—the removal of the greatest barrier in modern times to the progress of moral and intellectual improvement. It is the regeneration of the whole man—his restoration to those genial influences by which God is pleased to gladden us on earth and guide us to heaven; and accordingly you will find that wherever temperance has signally triumphed, not only the prosperities of life, but the blessings of religion, and the hopes of immortality have followed in its train. It is only, then, by the continued application of Christian principle, that you can hope for continued and increasing success. You well know how ineffectual all other means were found to be for the accomplishment of this object; how the threats and revilings, the denunciations and invectives, that used to be hurled on the head of the poor drunkard—how they fell on a rock: and so also the legal penalties, and the social proscriptions, and even the pulpit fulminations, they all smote on a rock that rang defiance to the infliction, and remained unruined as before. But when the Philanthropist flung away the hammer of coercion, and took the rod of love, *then* the waters gushed

forth, and the rocky nature was quelled into child-like and cordial submission. And so it must ever be. I do not believe there ever was a drunkard really reclaimed by coercion; or if he was coerced into a temporary reform, it was like the man out of whom one devil was cast, and when he came back and found a snug receptacle in the man's heart, all swept and garnished, he went and brought seven other devils, more wicked than himself, who took up their abode together; and the end of that man was worse than the beginning.

What are your Houses of Correction in regard to Intemperance? Rather Houses of Confirmation, in which the culprit is not reclaimed, but rendered irreclaimable. And so also in private life. How many a father has bitterly repented, to the last hour of his life, the unnatural harshness that drove his erring son to perdition, when by Christian gentleness he might have been easily subdued. The annals of domestic life abound with such instances; and no man of principle, who has been betrayed into this error, in the treatment of his delinquent friends, but has lived to deplore it. It has indeed been the besetting sin of society in former times; and many even of those gifted men, whose fate we have lamented, would have been among the first to be snatched from ruin, under the mild and Christian influences which are now exerted. The fate of one of the victims to the atrocity of the former system, I cannot help briefly recording. It was that of Robert Ferguson, the predecessor of Burns in his genius, and alas, in his frailties also. On his return from a tour with some of his convivial friends, he had a slight attack of what we would now call *delirium tremens*. His friends, instead of applying the remedies by which the malady is now generally removed in a few days or hours, confounded it with insanity, and threw him into a dungeon

which was then used in Edinburgh—the city of hospitals—as a receptacle for lunatics. Here his disease was of course speedily converted into confirmed madness, and he died a maniac, raving on his straw. This is the man to whom Burns erected a monument with the well-known inscription—

“No sculptured marble here, nor pompous lay,
No storied urn, nor animated bust,
This simple stone directs pale Scotia's way
To pour her sorrows, o'er her Poet's dust.”

And now, gentlemen of this Society, let me in conclusion exhort you to continue your efforts in the spirit by which they have been hitherto guided, to compensate in some measure for the awful errors of our forefathers in these respects. Civilized mankind is with you, and never was there a more auspicious era—never was that “fulness of time,” as the scriptures term it, more significantly manifest for the establishment of the great principle for which you are contending.

We cannot comprehend the whole scheme of Divine Providence in the government of the world; but one purpose we can clearly discern, viz. the progressive improvement of his human creatures, and their ultimate reunion, in the highest state of improvement, and in the most felicitous circumstances, which in this world they are capable of attaining. I have sometimes compared the primitive tribes of men in their original dispersion and distribution over the earth, to the youthful members of one family quitting their father's house together, parting at the threshold, to pursue their separate courses through the world, singly to battle with the storms of life, that when their probation was finished, and their fortunes fulfilled, they might return to enjoy the fruits of their labor, and be once more united in the paternal home. So it is. Those manifold sections of the great family of man were sent abroad on the earth, each to its allotted habitation,

there to undergo the process of training, to receive the moral and intellectual education which their peculiar circumstances required and imposed. And so they have been hitherto separated from each other by woods and wilds—by desert sands, and raging seas, and lofty mountains, and still more by moral causes—by diversities of speech, custom, and character; by mutual hatreds, jealousies and fears, till, the time of this preparatory process being complete, all these barriers, physical and moral, might be removed, and they should resolve themselves into one great and harmonious family, enriched by the multifarious contributions of all its members, henceforth to co-operate for the greatest good of each and of all. Is there any thing extravagant in this? Do we not find in all our retrospect of this world's history, the work of improvement going on even when it seemed to retrograde? And do we not *now* see, almost literally, mountains removed, and oceans bridged, and deserts paved for a common highway to the nations; the uttermost ends of the earth brought into virtual proximity, and the still wider gulphs of moral separation spanned by the radiant arch of united Intelligence and Faith. Now combine this ultimate reunion of the great family of man, so manifestly and so rapidly approaching, with the vigorous efforts which are every where made for the extinction of moral and social evils in all their forms; and say whether the disburthened earth will not soon enjoy its final Sabbath—that true Millenium which has been dimly fore-shadowed in the creeds of all nations—which has been joyously sung by the poets of all time, and which has been distinctly foretold by the Jewish and the Christian prophets—the era of Ultimate Redemption, when “the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to the” *moral* “Zion, with songs and ceaseless joy upon their heads, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”

