

The Catholic.

Quod semper; quod ubique; quod ab omnibus.

VOL. I.

KINGSTON, FRIDAY, JANUARY 7, 1831.

NO. 12.

ORIGINAL.

AGAINST DRUNKENNESS AND INTemperance.

Enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction: whose God is their belly, and who glory in their shame.

Philip 3. 18, 19.

I THINK it my duty on the present occasion to advert upon a certain abominable vice, which universally prevails, and which has become even fashionable in this country. The vice which I present would hold forth to your detestation, and on which, if possible, I could wish to stamp anew that just odium, which custom has gradually worn off; is the vice of drunkenness, a vice in itself so infamous and unnatural, that I cannot sufficiently wonder how it has gained such a footing in some parts of the civilized world; or, at least, how it is not reckoned among those secret and shameful sins, which modesty would conceal, and for which even the profligate would blush. But alas! such is the power of custom, that it often sanctions the most criminal practices; and makes that sometimes be admired as an accomplishment, which ought to be despised and abhorred as a vice. Witness the conduct of those unhappy miscreants, who are grown so callous to every moral feeling, who are so lost to every sense of virtue and honour, as to pride themselves in drinking and in making others drink to excess; and thus glory in their shame.—For, in deed, what is there to be found in nature so humiliating and disgusting, so completely vile and despicable as a drunk person; whose reason is drowned in liquor; whose senses are numbed and deadened; whose brain is in a ferment; whose soul is no longer able to govern her disordered machine the body, which staggers, and stumbles, and reels, and falls; while the tongue continues to mutter inconsistencies, and nothing of the man remains, but that spark of immortality the soul, whose sacred flame lies smothered in the fumes of liquor; although it cannot be extinguished. To what shall I compare such a hideous object? To a brute! Far be it from me to insult the God of nature by comparing such a monster to any of his creatures. I know of nothing created that would bide the odious comparison. And in this shameful enormity the drunk man remains unmatched.

That the very heathens, as we learn from their writings, should have looked upon the drunkard as an infamous character, I am not at all surprised: since common sense alone, abstracting from every motive of religion, must attach infamy to that vice, which sinks human nature beneath that of the brutes. For although we had nothing to fear or hope

in this life, or in the next, from the threats of promises of Almighty God; still reason alone, so long as the least spark of it remains in the human mind, if attended to, would make us abominate a vice, which so much degrades the dignity of human nature, and demeans the character of the man. But if to the motives which reason suggests for detesting the vice of drunkenness, we add those adduced by religion; and if with the united lights of reason and revelation we contemplate this monstrous vice in all its deformity, together with its fatal consequences for time and eternity, how is it possible for us not to abhor it? Not to look down with a certain religious pity, if not contempt, upon those who have made themselves slaves to it; and not to shun their company, as we would that of a person infected with the plague!

But, alas! so far as the generality of Christians, in this country, from conceiving such a just horror of this abominable vice, that in their opinion it is even honourable! For what is more common than to hear them relating to one another as a memorable exploit, or at least as a matter of indifference, their having filled others drunk on such and such an occasion, or their having got drunk themselves. Is it then a feat of honour, or is it such a matter of indifference, to deprive a man of his reason, by which he is distinguished from the brute? To efface in him, as much as possible, the image of his Maker, to which he is created? To banish the grace of God from his soul, and thus to deliver him up a defenceless prey to unclean spirits? To expose his life to a thousand accidents, and consequently his soul to eternal damnation? For, alas! there is no hope of salvation for him, whom death surprises in such a state; drunkenness being reckoned by St. Paul, among those sins which exclude for ever from the kingdom of heaven. What must we think of those who can boast of such a disbolical performance? and who scruple not to put themselves or others in such a deplorable state? Are they not already qualified for the company of devils, who thus delight in doing the work of devils, and who, like them, glory in mischief.—Woe to those who frequent their company, and who associate with them at their entertainments; where the demon of drunkenness always lurks at the costom of the bowl! Their drink shall prove to them *the gall of dragons, and the incurable venom of asps*. For, while it undermines the constitution of the body, it proves a mortal poison to the soul. It smothers every moral and Christian virtue. It inflames the passions, and makes them blaze forth with tenfold fury, like oil poured out upon the

fire. It breeds discord, strife, and enmity; and hence you may remark that such entertainments usually terminate in quarrels and uproar; and they, who had met the best of friends, often part irreconcilable enemies of one another. How can they, who are guilty of such excesses, call themselves Christians, that is disciples and followers of Jesus Christ? No, no, they are none of his. He knows them not, for he declares, that he knows not *the workers of iniquity*. They are of the number of those whom St. Paul denominates *enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and who glory in their shame*.

I cannot here omit taking notice that this vice of drinking to excess has become fashionable even at the burials of the dead; where friends are supposed to meet only to pay their last duties to the persons deceased, and to commit their dust to dust. The very idea of intemperance either in eating or drinking, on such a mournful occasions, is shocking and barbarous, and quite repugnant to every feeling of the human heart. When we behold the breathless body of our departed friend or acquaintance stretched out stiff and cold, and wrapt up in its winding sheet: when we view his hollow, pale and ghastly aspect; his lips, which used to move in friendly conversation with us, shut to open no more; his eyes, those windows of the soul, through which he has so often beheld us, now closed for ever, and sealed in death. When we reflect that in a few days hence that same body which we come to carry to its grave, and which has so often mingled with us in our friendly meetings and festive entertainments, shall resolve into rottenness and moulder into dust; if then, as Christians ought to do, we look a little beyond the grave, and consider what may be the fate of his lately departed soul, and how little perhaps she is partaking at that moment in our mirth and good cheer, while for her smaller sins she may be experiencing the scorching flames of purgatory; or, who knows, while perhaps she lies howling in hell: If, I say, we would only give room to these, or such like gloomy, but salutary reflections, which naturally obtrude themselves on such an occasion upon the mind of every thinking Christian; and make him read in the fate of others what may shortly be his own; I should think it impossible for us to give a loose to our mirth, or to eat or drink to excess on an occasion so mournful and melancholy.

Yet what is more common in this country, to its disgrace is it spoken, than drinking even to excess at the burials of the dead? Than loud and obstreperous talking; than wrangling, quarrels, and up-