

and their happy families, and what a change a few years use of ardent spirit has caused, and what they and their families are now. What a catalogue of wretchedness might any one of us make out. Very few but could remember 20, 30, 50 or 100 families ruined in this way—some of them once our most intimate friends—and their story is soon told.

They were once promising—excited high expectations were high spirited, despised every thing mean, and had a special contempt for a drunkard; and had a prophet proclaimed that they themselves should be all that they despised, they would have repelled it as a thing impossible. "Is thy servant a dog," as said Hazael, "that he should do this thing?"

But they could drink occasionally, just for a *spree*, for the sake of company. In this way the taste was acquired, and habits of dissipation formed. They became idle, and of course uneasy. And they drank partly to gratify taste, and partly to quiet conscience. They saw that the tide was coming in upon them, and for a time, perhaps, made some earnest but irregular struggles against it. But it gained upon them. Every flow of the tide drove in some barrier—the resistance became weaker and weaker—by and by the struggle is ended, and they float with the current; and where are they? One has been found by the temperance reformation a mere wreck—in property, character, body and mind, a mere wreck, and O miracle! reclaimed. After years of dissipation, after causing unspeakable misery, he is saved, yet so as by fire. Another is dead: his constitution could not bear such a continued course of dissipation. Another died in a fit—another was found by the road side one cold morning a stiffened corpse. Another was thrown from his horse, and is a cripple for life, but still can contrive means to pay a daily visit to the grocery. Another is a mere vagabond, unprincipled and shameless—wandering from grocery to grocery—fit companion for the lowest company. Drinking upon their bounty, yea, drinking their leavings—the mere rinsings of the glasses—a nuisance to society, and a curse to his kindred. Another is in the penitentiary, for a crime which he committed in a drunken frolic. Go into the crowded court-house, and you may see another; his countenance haggard and ghastly, and his eye wildly rolling in despair. What has he done? One night after spending all his money for drink, and loitering about till all the shops were closed, he returned to his miserable habitation. He found a few coals on the hearth, and his wife and children sitting by them. He threw one child this way, and another that, for he was cold. His wife remonstrated, and withal told him that what little fire there was, was none of his providing. With many a horrid oath he declared he would not be scolded after that sort. He would let her know who should govern, and by way of supporting his authority, beat her brains out with the last remaining stick of wood. He did not mean to kill her. Her dying struggles brought him to his senses, and he stood horror-struck. He would give almost any thing that the deed were not done. If that could restore her to life, he would be almost ready to give a pledge never to taste ardent spirit again. Now look at the wretchedness of this family. For years he has made very little provision for them; for they have lived as they could, half naked and half starved, and not educated at all—with a most wretched example before their eyes. What encouragement had the wife or children to attempt any thing—to make any exertion. The children are abused and trampled on at home, and they grow up without self-respect, without shame and without principle. Can any thing respectable be expected of them? And if they do rise, it must be through a world of difficulty.

How many thousand families have been ruined in some such way as this? The father was a drunkard, and the mother—what could she do? She endured, hoping against hope—and for the children's sake bore up against the current; and many a time disguised a sad despairing heart under a joyful countenance, till at length she died of a broken heart or died at the hands of him who had sworn to protect her!

These, and things like these, are the effects of ardent spirit—not casual, accidental, but common, natural effects, seen every where, in every town, in every neighborhood, and in every connection. Look which way we will, we see some of these effects. The greatest wretchedness which human nature in this world is called to endure, is connected with the use of ardent spirit. There is nothing else that degrades and debases man like it—nothing so

mean that a drunkard will not stoop to it—nothing too base for him to do to obtain his favorite drink. Nothing else so sinks the whole man—so completely destroys, not only all moral principle, but all self-respect, all regard to character, all shame, all human feeling. The drunkard can break out from every kind of endearing connection, and break over every kind of restraint; so completely extinct is human feeling, that he can be drunk at the funeral of his dearest relative, and call for drink in the last accents of expiring nature.

Now look at a human being, whom God has made for noble purposes, and endowed with noble faculties, degraded, disgraced, polluted, unfit for heaven, and a nuisance on earth. He is the centre of a circle—count up his influence in his family and his neighborhood—the wretchedness he endures, and the wretchedness he causes—count up the tears of a wretched wife, who curses the day of her espousals, and of wretched children who curse the day of their birth. To all this positive evil which ardent spirit has caused, add the happiness which but for it, this family might have enjoyed and communicated. Go through a neighborhood or a town in this way, count up all the misery which follows in the train of ardent spirit, and you will be ready to ask, can the regions of eternal death send forth any thing more deadly? Wherever it goes, the same cry may be heard—lamentation and mourning and woe; and whatever things are pure, or lovely, or venerable, or of good report, fall before it. These are the effects—and I need not say more upon this point. Can any man deny that "the ox is wont to push with the horns?"

2d. Hath this been testified to the owner? or are the makers and retailers aware of its effects? The effects are manifest, and they have eyes, ears and understandings as well as others. They know whatever profit they make is at the expense of human life or comfort; and that the tide which is swelled by their unallowed merchandise sweeps ten thousand yearly to temporal and eternal ruin. But this is not all. The attention of the public has of late been strongly turned to this subject. The minds of men have been enlightened, and their responsibility pressed home upon them. The subject has been presented to them in a new light, and men cannot but see the absurdity of reprobating the tempted, while the tempter is honored—of blaming drunkards and holding in reputation those whose business it is to make drunkards. But are the makers of ardent spirit aware of its effects? Look at the neighborhood of a distillery—an influence goes forth from that spot which reaches miles around—a kind of constraining influence, that brings in the poor and wretched, and thirsty, and vicious—Those who have money bring it—those who have none bring care—those who have neither bring household furniture—those who have nothing bring themselves and pay in labor. Now, the maker knows all these men, and knows their temperament, and probably knows their families. He can calculate effects; and he sends them off, one to die by the way, another to abuse his family, and others just ready for any deed of wickedness. Will he say that he is not responsible, and, like Cain, ask, "am I my brother's keeper?" He knew what might be the result, and for a moment of gain, was willing to risk it. Whether this man should abuse his family, or that man die by the way, so his purpose was answered, he did not care. The ox was wont to push with his horns, and he knew it; and for a little paltry gain he let him loose; and God will support his law in all its extent, by holding him responsible for all the consequences. But a common excuse is, that "very little of our manufacture is used in the neighborhood; we send it off."

Are its effects any less deadly? In this way you avoid seeing the effects, and poison strangers instead of neighbors. What would you say to a man who traded in clothes, infected with the small pox or cholera morbus; and who should say by way of apology—that he sent them off—he did not sell any in the neighborhood. Good man! he is willing to send disease and death all abroad! but he is too kind-hearted to expose his neighbours. Would you not say to him, you may send them off, but you cannot send off the responsibility. The eye of God goes with them, and all the misery which they cause will be charged to you. So we say to the man who sends his spirit off.

"But if I do not make it, somebody else will." What sin or crime cannot be excused in this way? I know of a plot to rob my neighbour; if I do not go and plunder him somebody else will.