

A PLEA FOR INEBRIATE ASYLUMS.

UNFORTUNATELY for the human race, the vice of intemperance in the use of intoxicating drinks is not confined to any particular nation or section of people. Under some form or other it exists among the civilized and polished, as among the most degraded and barbarous people; no class of society is free from its baneful influence: it corrupts and prostrates the character of the man of station and of learning, and sinks in hopeless ruin the unfortunate artisan, and the unlettered labourer. The consuming tide rolls on, engulfing thousands of souls in its sweeping and destructive course, seemingly defying all barriers interposed to stay its progress, and threatening to entail on the human family the most direful results.

Yet how much of the evil is to be charged to the luke-warmness of those who do not recognize the sinfulness of Intemperance? There cannot be a doubt, that the continued existence of drunkenness is to a very considerable extent to be attributed to the lax system of toleration which so widely prevails amongst all classes, and the apparent indifference with which the curse is viewed, too frequently leading the unfortunate victim to look on his state rather as a weak fault or excusable failing than a great sin, and so perpetuating a degrading vice to his utter destruction and eternal ruin. By what strange infatuation men are so certainly lured on to ruin it is not easy to understand, for if there is one kind of knowledge more than another, which is manifest and open to all, it is the knowledge of the fact that the career of the drunkard ends in ruin to himself, and wretchedness to all with whom he is connected. The records of our criminal courts annually furnish a long list of cases, from the crime of petty larceny to that of murder, which are traceable to hours misspent in debauchery—to days and nights wasted in drunken revels—to the companionship of fools, who gloried in the degradation which they worked one with the other.* Painful as it may be to look on the stupid sot, decaying in body and mind, how much more sad, to realize the train of wretchedness and misery which follow in the track of his depravity—a cheerless home awaits his return from the haunts of his folly—a broken-spirited and care-worn wife, neglected and ragged children—these are sharp irons which enter into his very soul, and add bitterness to a heart not dead to the obligations of duty. But experience proves that by this as by every other vice, the conscience becomes more and more seared, until at length, regardless of all consequences, feelings of shame cease to arise, domestic misery is not recognized, and a career of crime, or the sudden perpetration of some desperate criminal act, plunges the wretched victim into the felon's cell. The career of the persistent drunkard is seldom swift, but it is a sure road to ruin:

* "A STARTLING RECORD."—Under this caption the *New York Observer* comments upon a statement quoted by the *Boston Transcript* from the *Harvard Magazine*, to the effect that of the only ninety composing the last graduating class in Harvard College, "fifty-one smoke, sixty-five drink, fifty-seven do both, and twenty neither." The *Observer* says:—"In the most venerable educational institution of the venerable commonwealth of Massachusetts, we are told out of the ninety composing the class just graduated, sixty-five 'drink.' They will go forth unquestionably to show their influence in years to come against the cause of temperance. In the high places of the land, in positions of power and authority in the courts, on the rostrum, on the bench, in their varied professional pursuits, they may be found on the side of those who are at best indifferent to the evils manifold occasioned by the use of intoxicating drinks. Such facts are of ill omen for our country's future. Drunken politicians have been the curse of the land. Repeatedly have they brought upon us national disgrace. No true patriot can be indifferent to the character of the candidates for political eminence, and yet we may discern beforehand what that character must be, if two-thirds of our college graduates give promise by present habits of the profligacy that is usually allied with a free use of the intoxicating cup."