

deranged, that even conscience ceases to exercise a just and lawful influence, and ideas are conceived, and actions performed, under a total incapacity for clearly distinguishing right from wrong.

Inebriation, from the effect it produces upon the stomach and the brain, has a more instantaneous influence upon the nervous system, and consequently upon the mind, than any other disease. There are, of course, degrees of this influence, beginning first with the slightly pleasurable sensation which some persons experience after drinking a single glass of wine, and extending to the last and fatal draught of the poor outcast from respectable society. It is often asked, why does not the drunkard stop? and he is sometimes most severely blamed for taking too much, by those who take only a little less. But how should he stop, when his mind has lost its healthy tone in consequence of the particular state of his body?—when he ceases to be capable of distinguishing betwixt good and evil, and cares not for any consequences that may come upon him? How should he stop? It is a mockery of common sense, and an insult to common feeling, to suppose that of himself, and unaided, he should have the power to do so. At that critical moment he has not even the *wish* to stop. So far from it, his inclination is on the opposite side, and the whole force of his animal nature, with an excess of bodily appetite, are increasing on the side of evil, in the same proportion that his mental capabilities, his conscience, and his power of self-mastery, are becoming weaker on the side of good.

And this is the man of whom the world judges so hardly, because he has passed unconsciously the forbidden line—because he has never been able to ascertain exactly where it was—and, most probably, because from some natural constitution of body, the same draught which was safely drunk by another, was one of fearful peril to him.

The original construction of the bodily frame has much to do with the diseases to which we are liable through the whole of our lives. There are hereditary tendencies which the skill of the physician, the care of the parent, and the advice of the friend, are strenuously exerted to correct. In no case are hereditary tendencies more striking than in the children of intemperate parents. It is true, the very excess, and consequent ruin, of one generation, not unfrequently tend to place certain individuals of the next more scrupulously upon their guard against the same lamentable fate, and ultimate safety often depends upon an early apprehension of danger. But there is in the bodily constitution of such families a peculiar liability which ought to render them the objects of the tenderest sympathy, and the most watchful care to others. There is in their very nature, if once excited, an aching want of that stimulus, which even a very slight degree of intoxication supplies; and when once this want is gratified, it increases to such a degree, as to resemble a consuming fire, whose torment nothing can alleviate, but constant libations of the same deadly draught.

Now it is quite-impossible we should know, when mixing in general society, where and when we may meet with individuals of this constitutional tendency; for even with children of the most respectable parents, it sometimes prevails to an alarming extent. Perhaps we sit down to table with twenty persons, and amongst them is one of those to whom the cup of which others are drinking, as they believe innocently, is the cup of poison and of death. Perhaps that one is a father's hope, or the only child of a widowed mother, or the beloved and betrothed of a young and trusting heart, about to become the father of a family, the head of a household, and himself in his turn an example and a guide to others. His friends drink with him. They all partake in safety, but within his bosom the latent elements of destruction are set on fire, and he plunges headlong into shame, and misery, and ruin. To a certain extent his friends have gone along with him. They have even pressed and encouraged him, to partake; but no sooner do they perceive that he has overstepped a certain dubious

and almost imperceptible limit—or in other words, that his bodily frame has not been able to sustain what they have borne uninjured—than they turn from him, and acknowledge him no more as a companion and a friend. They are, in fact, ashamed to be seen with him. He loses caste amongst them, becomes a marked man, and is finally left to perish as an object of disgust and loathing, too gross to be reclaimed, and too low for pity.

Nor is it with those who are constitutionally liable alone that this bodily tendency exists. The habit of intemperance itself creates it; and thousands who have begun their ruinous career, simply out of compliance with the usages of society, and not a few who have done so under medical advice, have acquired, for certain kinds of stimulants, and sometimes for all, an habitual craving, which they have ultimately sacrificed every other consideration to gratify. How do we know them, in mixing with society, but that we are sitting down to table with some individual who has just arrived at the turning point in this career? One who has just begun to suspect his own danger, who is hanging, as the weak always do, upon the example of others, and looking especially to religious people, to see what sanction they may give to an indulgence for which he is ever in search of an excuse? How do we know, amongst the many with whom we associate, and whose private history is untold to us—how do we know whose eyes may be fixed upon us, with an anxious hope that we shall go along with them in the course they are so desirous to pursue, though they would still wish to pursue it without condemnation or guilt? Now, if these eyes should be beaming from a young and trusting heart, unconscious of the whole extent of the danger, and fondly believing that safety dwells with us, but more especially if they beam from the fair countenance of woman—oh, if at the same moment we could look upon the misery and the guilt that would ensue to the being thus regarding us, and thus plunging into perdition from our example, what should we say to the Christian man or woman, who could esteem a trifling act of self-denial—of mere bodily privation—as too great a sacrifice to be made on such an occasion!

"Oh, but!" the indignant exclamation is, "we do not meet with persons of this kind in respectable society. We do not sit down with such at table. The haunts of vice are where they resort. We can have nothing to do with their excesses." From whence then has come that degraded figure, with his tattered garments, yet with the air of gentility still about him? From whence has come that wretched female, shrinking from the public gaze, as if the remembrance of her childhood, and the honoured roof beneath which her girlish footsteps trod, was yet too strong for that burning fire to consume, or that fatal flood to drown? Amongst the six hundred thousand victims of intemperance now in existence, are there not many such as these?—many who have known what it was to be respectably brought up, who had better thoughts, and purer feelings, in their youth, and who shrunk, as we do now, with horror and disgust from the contemplation of a figure presenting such a wreck of humanity as theirs?

But acknowledging that these six hundred thousand persons are already lost—that their doom is sealed—that they are beyond the reach of our influence, and beneath even our charity to pity as we pass them by—acknowledging what is a well authenticated fact, that sixty thousand of these die annually—what shall we say of the sixty thousand who will, during the course of this year, come forward to supply their place in the ranks of intemperance? Let us pause a moment to contemplate the awful fact, that unless rescued from destruction by some extraordinary interposition of Divine Providence, there will be sixty thousand persons entered upon the list of intemperance during the present year, and that an equal number, before twelve months have passed, will have died the death of those of whom it is clearly stated, that none can enter the kingdom of heaven!