

been to stop her ears, to turn away her eyes from the fascinating fruit, and to depart entirely and with all speed from the scene of her danger. If a man wishes to escape the hazard of being dashed to pieces at the bottom of an ice-covered hill, his best way is not to trifle on the slippery places on its brow.

2. In the second place, abstinence is more eligible as a cure for intemperance than moderation, because the least indulgence is unnecessary: and if evil be, in a high degree, the probable result of an unnecessary indulgence, it is clear that it should be avoided. If ardent spirits be necessary, they must be necessary for some purpose. Now what good purpose do they serve? Are they essential to the protection or improvement of health, to the creation or support of social hilarity, or to the cultivation of talent or sentiment? If they be not essential to one or other of these, they cannot be very necessary to our well-being.

Health being supposed to be at present enjoyed, is indulgence in ardent spirits necessary to its continuance? The most skilful medical men say, No. The soberest men, in reference to their own experience, say, No. The healthiest of our race never taste them. Those who use them most freely, and praise them most highly, are often found boasting rather how much they can drink without being the worse for it—that is, I suppose, without altogether unhinging their rational faculties, or immediately and seriously injuring their health—than how much, next day particularly, their heads are the clearer, their hearts the more peaceful, or their bodily frames the fresher or more vigorous. So, then, it seems the nice problem is, how much may be taken and no harm done. Now, what does this amount to? To no more than this: How much fire may I carry in my bosom, and yet not be burned? How far may I venture to tamper with, or undermine, my constitution, without hazarding its speedy or total destruction?

Again, are ardent spirits necessary for promoting social hilarity? Hilarity, at proper seasons, is allowable, it is desirable. 'A merry heart does good like a medicine.' But, to suppose that indulgence in ardent spirits is necessary for this purpose, would be a libel on the *powers of the mind*, on the *powers of education*, on the *very nature of knowledge*, and of the *social affections*.

It would be a libel on the powers of the human mind. Could it be imagined, without at once impiously impeaching the wisdom of the Creator and cruelly degrading his workmanship, that the stores of wit and pleasantry could not be unlocked, that 'the feast of reason and the flow of soul could not be enjoyed,' but by calling in an auxiliary, having a tendency to set on fire 'the course of nature,' and to introduce pain and sorrow, by creating a transitory, an unnatural, and unholy excitement. By the supposition, too, that such aid is required to produce social hilarity, it is in effect declared, that social enjoyment arises more from a stimulating animal gratification, than from being trained to the easy, and vigorous, and active exercise of the powers of reason and imagination; that knowledge, at once the light, and alimert, and strength of the mind, is not of a discursive nature, and calculated by its unrestrained and natural circulation from mind to mind, to generate the highest delight, that it would stagnate unless kept flowing by an extraneous power, and that the interchange of the sentiments of esteem from hearts properly disposed, and overflowing with kindly feelings, cannot impart happiness unless seasoned and quickened with a pungent stimulant, that may excite to frenzy, but has no tendency to infuse composure.

If ardent spirits are necessary to ease and freedom of conversation, it can only be in the case of the selfish, the sullen, and the suspicious. Such per-