

*Temperance is the moderate use of things beneficial, and abstinence from things hurtful.*

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## DR. JOHNSON, *VERSUS* WINE DRINKERS.

"The words of the wise are as goads."

In a party at Sir Joshua Reynolds', the question was discussed, whether drinking improved conversation and benevolence. Sir Joshua maintained it did. Dr. Johnson replied, "No, Sir, before dinner men meet with great inequality of understanding, and those who are conscious of their inferiority, have the modesty not to talk; but when they have drunk wine, every man feels himself comfortable, and loses that modesty, and grows impudent and vociferous; but he is not improved, he is only not sensible of his defects."

Sir Joshua said the doctor was talking of the effects of excess in wine; and that a moderate glass enlivened the mind, by giving a proper circulation to the blood; "I am," said he, "in very good spirits when I get up in the morning, by dinner time I am exhausted; wine puts me in the same state as when I got up, and I am sure that moderate drinking makes people talk better." Dr. Johnson, "No, Sir, wine gives no light, gay, ideal hilarity; but tumultuous, noisy, clamorous merriment; I admit that the spirits are raised by drinking as by the common participation of any pleasure; cock-fighting or bear-baiting will raise the spirits of a company as drinking does, though surely they will not improve conversation. I also admit that there are some sluggish men who are improved by drinking, but these are spirits which are not good till they are rotten. I indeed allow there have been a very few men of talents who are improved by drinking; but I maintain that I am right as to the effects of drinking in general; and let it be considered that there is no position, however false in its universality, which is not true of some particular men." At another time, being at Sir Joshua Reynolds', the Dr. harangued upon the qualities of different liquors; he said "Claret, Sir, is the liquor for boys; port for men; but he who aspires to be a hero (smiling), must drink brandy. In the first place, the flavour of brandy is most grateful to the palate; and the brandy will do soonest for a man what drinking can do for him."

In reply to some remarks made by Mr. Spottiswoode, a solicitor, he said, "Wine makes a man better pleased with himself. But the danger is, that while a man grows better pleased with himself, he may be growing less pleasing to others. Wine gives a man nothing, it neither gives him knowledge nor wit; it only animates a man, and enables him to bring out what a dread of the company has repressed. A man should cultivate his mind so as to have that confidence and readiness without wine, which wine gives."

Mr. Boswell said, "The great difficulty of resisting wine, is from benevolence, for instance a good worthy man asks you to taste his wine, which he has had twenty years in his cellar."

Dr. Johnson—"No good and worthy man: will insist upon another man's drinking wine."

Talking of a man's resolving to deny himself the use of wine from moral and religious considerations, he said, "He must not doubt about it, when one doubts as to pleasure, we know what will be the conclusion. I now no more think of drinking wine than a horse does. That wine upon the table is no more for me than for the dog that is under the table. Yet, (added he) I did not leave off wine because I could not bear it; I have drunk three bottles of port without being the worse for it. University college has witnessed this." Mr. Boswell—"Why then, Sir, did you leave it off?" Dr. Johnson—"Why, Sir, because it is so much better for a man to be sure that he is never to be intoxicated, never to lose the power over himself."

Boswell—"I think, Sir, you once said to me, that not to drink wine was a great deduction from life" Dr. Johnson—"It is a diminution of pleasure, to be sure, but I do not say a diminution

of happiness; there is more happiness in being rational." Mr. Boswell—"I allow there may be greater pleasures than from wine—I have had more pleasure from your conversation." Dr. Johnson—"When we talk of pleasure, we mean sensual pleasure. Philosophers tell you that pleasure is contrary to happiness; gross men prefer animal pleasure."

Dr. Johnson, (says Mr. Boswell) recommended me to drink water only. "For, (said he) you are sure not to get drunk, whereas if you drink wine you are never sure."

Mr. Boswell mentioned a nobleman who he believed was really uneasy if his company would not drink hard.

Dr. Johnson—"That is from having had people about him whom he has been accustomed to command." Mr. Boswell—"Supposing I should be a tete-a-tete with him at table." Dr. Johnson—"Sir, there is no more reason for you drinking with him, than his being sober with you." Mr. Boswell—"Why that is true, for it would do him less injury to be sober, than it would do me to get drunk." Dr. Johnson—"Yes, sir, and from what I have heard of him, one would not wish to sacrifice himself to such a man. If he must have always somebody to drink with him, he should buy a slave, and then he would be sure to have it. They who submit to drink as another pleases, make themselves his slaves."—*Scottish Temperance Journal.*

## CONFESSTONS OF A DRUNKARD

The following will be read with deep interest, what it is considered that it came from the pen of the lamented CHARLES L. LINA.

"Could the youth to whom the flavour of his first wine is delicious as the opening scenes of life, or the entering upon some newly-discovered paradise, look into my desolation, and be made to understand what a dreary thing it is when a man shall feel himself going down a precipice with open eyes and a passive will—to see his destruction, and have no power to stop it, and yet to feel it all the way emanating from himself; to perceive all goodness emptied out of him, and yet not be able to forget a time when it was otherwise; to bear about the piteous spectacle of his own self ruins: could he see my fevered eye,—feverish with last night's drinking, and feverishly looking for this night's repetition of the folly; could he feel the body of death out of which I cry hourly with feebler and feebler outcry to be delivered,—it were enough to make him dash the sparkling beverage to the earth in all the pride of its mantling temptation.

O if a wish could transport me back to those days of youth when a draught from the next clear spring could slake any heats which summer suns and youthful exercise had power to stir up in the blood, how gladly would I return to thee, pure element, the drink of children, and of child-like hermits! In my dreams, I can fancy thy cool refreshment purling over my burning tongue. But my waking stomach rejects it. That which refreshes innocence only makes me sick and faint.

But is there no middle way betwixt total abstinence and the excess which kills you? For your sake, reader, and that you may never attain to experience, with pain I must utter the dreadful truth, that there is none, none that I can find. In my stage of habit (I speak not of habits less confirmed; for some of them I believe to be most prudential), in the stage to which I have reached, to stop short of that measure which is sufficient to draw on torpor and sleep,—the benumbing apoplectic sleep of the drunkard,—is to have taken none at all. The pain of the self-denial is all one. And what that is I had rather the reader should believe on my credit than know from his own trial. He will come to know it whenever he shall arrive at the state in which, paradoxical as it may appear, reason shall only visit him through intoxication. For it is a fearful truth, that the intellectual faculties, by repeated acts