

THE HOME CIRCLE.

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NO. 8.—SOBRIETY IN THE HOUSEHOLD.

Having treated on family etiquette in a former paper, we now come to consider its twin-sister sobriety. "Be courteous," "be sober," are Divine injunctions of equal import. The observant spectator requires no argument to satisfy him that wherever the principle of sobriety is discarded—whether in Church, State, or the domestic circle, it is impossible to maintain anything like good order. Hence the necessity of adopting this fundamental principle in the government of the household, which, as we have already shown, constitutes the mainspring of all society.

In considering the subject the question naturally arises, what is the real meaning of the term sobriety? The most distinguished lexicographers define it thus: "Habitual soberness or temperance as to the use of spirituous liquors;—habitual freedom from enthusiasm, inordinate passion, or overheated imagination;—gravity without sadness or melancholy; moderation, calmness, coolness, seriousness, solemnity." This definition evidently covers the whole ground, and furnishes ample food for thought. Doubtless its primary meaning is to keep in check every evil propensity of our degenerate nature. However, in viewing the subject in connection with the appropriation of the term as it is generally used at the present day, we are led to consider *total abstinence from intoxicating liquors*. This limited appropriation has been adopted owing chiefly to the prevalence of intemperance in drinking, as the one giant *vice* which has become so wide spread and alarming, that we are almost compelled to forget all other evils as we think sadly of this mighty one that rests like a blighting, withering curse on our social life, sending up a long, sad wail from desolated homes, broken hearts, crushed hopes, squandered fortunes all over the land, and bearing with it on the breeze the despairing cry "Is there no help for us?" In this sense we shall view it in this article; and in doing so, we feel justified in attributing the extent of the evil to the popular custom of moderate wine drinking in the family circle. With all due respect to those who differ from us in this matter— if such there are—we emphatically denounce the whole system though time-honoured—of fashionable home drinking, as the great curse of our land. It is an upas tree whose pernicious roots are unblushingly permeating every department of society. Were it not for such convivial association the bar-room tippler could find no pretext for his revolting conduct. It is respectable, careful, Christian, moderate home wine-drinkers, who send forth, chiefly, from the high places of society, and sometimes even from the portals of the sanctuary, an unsuspected, unbuked, but powerful influence, which is secretly and silently on every hand doing its work of death. It is this orthodox drinking that furnishes a *salvo* for the inquietude of the drunkard's conscience, which saves the dram-shop loafer from deserved reproach, and encourages youth in occasional drinking excesses. We feel