

ray, even better, may be enjoyed. Happily for our cause, there are hundreds and thousands of witnesses now ready to attest the fact, that they never were so well as since they totally abstained; while on the other hand, those who declare themselves incapable of doing without such stimulus, almost invariably show by an exhibition of some, or many maladies, that they do very badly with it.

If then it is the frequent and almost invariable tendency of those who take a little wine to make them comfortable, to take a little and a little more, as the body under its various ailments may seem to require, what must be done when the mind with its long catalogue of deeper maladies becomes disturbed? What must be done as it becomes a pray to all those gnawing anxieties which mix themselves in with the under-current of daily life, especially in the present state of society? Why the sudden intelligence of an unexpected loss will often induce a man to gratify himself with this kind of imaginary strength; while the necessity of dismissing a servant not less frequently sends the mistress of a house for refreshment to her sideboard. And yet we are told there is no danger—no danger at all in all this. I repeat, that, not knowing exactly where the line of danger is, it is and must be a perilous experiment to all; and nothing can tend more forcibly to substantiate this truth, than the fact that all men, and all women too, who are now the degraded victims of intemperance, began and went on precisely in this manner, not one amongst them intending, or believing it possible at first, that they should ever exceed the limits prescribed by safety or decorum.

But what is it which makes this wine, or this liquid, which soothes away our pain, so desirable? Is it not a pleasurable sensation throughout the whole animal frame—a little warmth—a little comfort—a little energy—a little confidence—a little satisfaction in ourselves—a *very little* of all these, so little that we could not define their combined operation, except by saying *would feel better than before?* And yet this very feeling, innocent as it may appear in itself, is in reality a *degree* of intoxication. The same sensation thrilling through the frame, is what, by advancing a few steps farther in the same course, would become muscular distortion—the same pleasant glow would become a restless fever—the same sense of comfort would be ecstatic folly—the same energy would be madness—the same confidence would be incapability of shame, and the same self-satisfaction would be the same glorious exultation of the intemperate in his own disgrace.

It is painful—it is repulsive to enter into these minute descriptions, on a subject which it would be a privilege to be enabled to forget, and to forget for ever. But it is due to that subject that it should be fairly treated, and it is due to the honored friends of the temperance cause, that their views and their principles should be clearly understood. Let us regard it then in another light.

We have, most probably, all witnessed the effect of nitrous oxide upon the human system; or if any have not, I may speak of it as that kind of gas which, when inhaled produces the effect of immoderate laughter, with extraordinary excitement of the animal frame and spirits, so that the person thus stimulated exhibits the most ridiculous behaviour. Now suppose the same individual, who had made this exhibition of himself in the evening, was come the next day to transact any serious business with you, having inhaled only a very small portion of the same gas, only just enough to make him feel more comfortable than he did before, would you not consider him less sane, less rational, and less safe in every way, than if he had not breathed the gas at all? Unquestionably you would; and in exactly the same proportion as it had made him feel more comfortable, you would be convinced it had disqualified him for the occupations, the reflections, and the duties of a man. I do not say that he would be wholly disqualified. Far from it. He himself would be more lively, more ready, and more confident of himself in every way. But would he in reality

be more competent, and more deserving of the confidence of others? Most assuredly not; and you see in an instant in this case, that a perfectly wise man would not trust himself to breathe, though but in a small quantity, what was capable of confusing, and even maddening, his brain.

Again, let us ask of a Christian philanthropist whether, if he had committed to him the sovereignty of some newly discovered island, for the government of whose inhabitants he had to make laws, which should influence the character and welfare of those people through successive ages; if also they had hitherto lived in total ignorance of the use and properties of intoxicating liquids—Let us ask whether, thus situated, and taking into account all the good, and all the evil already done in other countries, by the introduction of such knowledge, he would deem it benevolent or wise to introduce such indulgences amongst the people over whom he ruled, and for whose virtue and happiness here, and hereafter, he was necessarily so deeply responsible.

Surely there are few who would not answer to this question, "No. Let my people go on in their ignorance of this incentive to passion and to vice. It is enough for me to govern them aright, without inventing a new enemy to their welfare in this artificial and extraordinary means of excitement; and lest my own example in using such means myself, even in moderation, should induce them to use it to excess, I will cheerfully endure the inconvenience of removing what is to me an innocent enjoyment, esteeming it a privilege to do so for the sake of those who are weaker and more ignorant than myself."

If, then, such would be the language, and such the decision of every sincere well-wisher to the human race, should not the same feeling operate at least as powerfully in a country already suffering from this fatal knowledge, in all its domestic, social, and political interests? And though, happily for us, it is not left to any single individual to make laws for our government in this or any other respect, it is surely not too much to ask,—why the same principle which would induce the absolute sovereign to give up his own use of so dangerous an indulgence for the sake of his people, does not operate with the enlightened Christian, so as to call forth the exercise of his influence to the utmost extent in the same benevolent cause?

Once more, let us try the subject in a different point of view. There is much talk in the present day of the wonderful effects of mesmerism; and without entering into the merits or demerits of the question at large, we will suppose for an instant, that all the cases we read of are substantiated by sufficient proof. If however, while we believed this mysterious agency to have been the means of removing or suspending certain maladies, we knew beyond a doubt that it had been the cause of death to many, of madness to more, and of misery to all upon whom it operated to excess; if no one either could tell exactly how far its operation was safe; but all could perceive that it had a peculiar tendency to lead people on in their exercise of it, from one step to another, until reason was finally overthrown, and folly and vice unscrupulously committed under its influence; should any of us in our senses, seeing and knowing all this, be willing to introduce the practice of mesmerism into our families, even when exercised to a very trifling extent? Should we desire to make it a part of our social enjoyments; or should we not rather, considering the immense amount of evil it was capable of doing, in proportion to its good—*seeing too that the good was to the body, and the evil to the mind*—should we not rather dismiss the system altogether from our own practice, as unworthy the countenance of prudent and responsible beings?

Yes, already we are startled at the practice of this strange art in our hospitals; and although guiltless of having produced any deterioration in the morals of the happiness of the people, already we look with suspicion and fear upon