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The Pathology of Drunkenness.

We shall now make another digression, and suppose a case, at the very contemplation of which our soul sickens, but which is not, nevertheless, an imaginary one. A drunken man is a piteous spectacle; but what tongue can tell the loathsomeness of an habitually drunken woman? Suppose, then, that the wife of an unhappy sot has become insatiably addicted to alcoholic stimulus; no matter from what cause—his own redemption is almost hopeless, if he feels towards her as a man should for the partner of his bosom. He may have been unkind, she may have sought the bottle to solace sorrow, the vice may have grown upon her unconsciously; it matters not how, but, from the moment that he discovers her infirmity, there is neither rest nor peace in this world for him. Think not, reader, that this is a mere vision of the imagination. Alas! it is but too awful a reality. Our pen is dipped in truth and we do but describe what our eyes have seen and our ears heard. Horrible as the picture is, every line is drawn from the life.

At first, she conceals from her spouse the propensity of which she has lost the control and the seeds of deceit, the bane of conjugal happiness, are sown in her mind, if they were not there before; and, if they were, they expand and thrive by the moisture of the cup. The husband sees her beauty fade and her health fail without suspecting the cause; for his heart is bound up in hers and his affection blinds him. Of the whole circle in which he moves he is the last to discover why he never hears from his consort any accents but of complaint and reproach, why her children and her household are neglected; in short, why his home is no longer a home to him. At last, he discovers the reason and expostulates. She has learned to lie and stoutly denies the fact. All confidence is now at an end; but he is obliged to endure what he cannot cure: all his care now is to conceal her disgrace. But it cannot be concealed, the habit visibly gains upon her every day, and it is not the kindness of relatives or the compassion of friends that will prevent them from using their eyes.

At last, she is constrained to admit it at the accusation is just; she promises with tears and self-reproach, to sin no more; she calls Heaven to witness the sincerity of her penitence and intention of amendment, and he believes her, and rejoices in the prospect of a happier future. Vain hope; he leans upon the pointed spear fated to pierce him. Women have not even as much control over this appetite as men. The very next day he comes home to find her helplessly intoxicated. He cannot bear or even think of it, and he therefore flies to the tavern, where he drowns sense and recollection in the bowl himself. Much hast thou to answer for, unhappy woman. Him whom thou didst swear to comfort and cherish, thou hast destroyed, body and soul.

In the morning he returns home and the guilty wife, trembling like an aspen from the effects of excess, carries the war into Africa and reproaches him with his absence and neglect. He sternly tells her the cause. She uplifts her hands and calls her creator to witness that she has not tasted, touched or handled the accursed thing. Yes, Jehovah is invoked to attest a wilful, deliberate lie! A violent quarrel ensues, in which the volubility of the guilty wife proves an overmatch for the guilty husband. She swears

to her unbroken sobriety and he retorts that, after what has passed, he will not take her word for a straw and attaches less than a feather's weight to her oath. He is now less and less at home and their intercourse becomes more and more stormy. Their habitation rings with oaths and execrations. Their purse is no longer in common—he dares not trust her, and is scarce fit to be trusted with it himself. It is of no avail; she gets the liquid abomination at the grocery at the corner, on credit. The servants are forbidden to go for it and she goes herself. Rank, station, pride, modesty, are forgotten—her devouring thirst must be slacked. She is become as great a liar as the world contains. She will swear to her raging husband that she has not taken a drop, though the apartment smells like a distillery; yea, though he may have wrested the flask from her hand and the glass from her lips. It is in vain that money is withheld, that the grocer is forbidden to trust and the servants to obey her. She picks his pockets while he sleeps, she borrows, she sells or pawns her furniture and apparel, she obtains her detestable supplies from a distance, she bribes the servants or calls beggars from the streets and sends them on her hateful errand. The keepsakes of her friends, the remembrances of departed relatives, the locket that contains her mother's hair, the gold and gems that enhance her portrait, her very wedding ring, all go for rum. Her husband's property fares no better.

Does she never see and deplore the ruin she has wrought and is yet to work? Does she never make a resolution and effort to amend? Oh, yes; in her rare intervals of sobriety she loves her husband and worships her children, if they are not already dead in consequence of her mismanagement and neglect. She promises better things in good faith and singleness of heart. She might have been reclaimed once; but the season has gone by. She was once prudent and economical. Now she is wasteful and extravagant. She formerly shuddered at the idea of an obligation and now she runs her consort into debt without remorse, scruple or hesitation. Still, if she hears evil spoken of him by another, she resents it. After swallowing one cup however, she slanders and reviles him to all who will listen. If you believe her, his refusal to give her money is the throft of a niggard; the force he has reluctantly been compelled to use to restrain her drunkenness within doors is maltreatment and brutality.

If there is, if there ever was any man utterly wretched, it is the husband of such a woman. His spirit is crushed, his hopes have departed. His efforts are useless, his heart is broken. His usefulness is impaired, his respectability lessened, his nerves unstrung. He has no home—the knots tied by Hymen have become gyves and shackles, the lightener of his cares a millstone about his neck. The house where his wife lives is a hell to him; his own threshold burns and bruises his foot when he crosses it. His shame has become public, and the charitable world, which is seldom at the trouble to try a cause before passing sentence, with its usual chivalrous feeling, takes part with the offending wife. He ill treats her, it is said, and the most lenient judgment is, that, with a better husband, she would be a better wife. Who can tell how cruelly he uses her, when he keeps her shut up and no eye sees them? It is certain that he allows her no money, and that she has not a sufficiency of clothing. It is to be presumed, too, that he is faithless to her, for half his nights