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Mrs. Ben Darby; or the Weal and Woe of Social Life.

BY GEORGE B. JOCELYN.

MY DEAR DOCTOR,—You are aware that I am not prone to praise a work that comes to me in the questionable shape of a novel; but I have resolved, with your consent, not only to praise one, but to do it publicly and under my proper signature.

I have read the work, the title of which is at the head of this article, and I am free to confess that I look upon it as the best work of the kind that has been issued from the American press; and I doubt not, but that its talented authoress, Mrs. Angelina Maria Collins, has done a work, the results of which will be felt in every community in which the book is read. It is a faithful portraiture—so far as language can portray them—of some of the evils that alcohol produces in the social circle. Her many scenes are all drawn from life, and she has woven them together into one piece whose fearful beauty will remain forever daguerreotyped upon the mind of that one who may read the work. There is no sickly sentimentality about the book; but it abounds in striking pictures that cannot fail to attract and retain the admiration of the reader.

While she is depicting with a skillful hand the miseries of the intemperate, she takes a bold and decided stand for the entire prohibition of the manufacture of, and traffic in, alcoholic liquors; she assumes this as the only remedy for the wide-spread evils of the monster intemperance. We hail this idea—an idea running through all the late Temperance works—as one of the evidences of a more healthy tone of feeling in the body social; and when this idea is fully embraced and proclaimed in social life, the day will not be far distant when the body politic will incorporate it into the laws by which intemperance is to be destroyed.

But, my dear Doctor, I did not commence this letter with the idea of writing an article upon intemperance; but, simply, to speak of this excellent book.

It is the history of the daughter of a fashionable woman, who, in her childhood, learned to love liquor, by having it furnished her, in "sweetened drams," by her parents. When she grew up she found that she had formed a habit that was her master—a habit that caused her to forget her own womanhood—her vows to her first husband, Mr. Temple—to forget her child—to associate, in a guilty marriage, with Ben Darby—to go on in the downward career of drunkenness, till life itself was destroyed, and she was ushered into the presence of that God who has said, "no drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God."

While tracing her history, she introduces other characters from the various walks of life, and shows that the

demon spares neither age nor sex, rank nor condition, but strikes down, with malignant power, all who are so unfortunate as to come within the dread circle of his blighting influence.

The following extracts, we think, will show the power and truthfulness of the authoress, and, also, be interesting to your readers, and, perhaps, cause them to buy the book, read, and have their hatred of the accursed traffic increased.

The first extract is the language of Henry Temple, the first husband of Mrs. Darby, as he commits his child, Eleanor, to the care of his sister.

'I must,' said he to his sister, 'leave these beautiful scenes and quiet shades [his boyhood's home,] for the bustle of city life; I must meet my fellow man; it will not do for me to live in the world and shun it like a monk or a brigand. I must struggle against fate. \* \* \*'

I give you, dear sister, my best confidence when I give you my child. Keep her from the whirlpool of fashion; hide her from pollution, and, as you value my love, never, no, never let her taste ardent spirits!'

'O, what do you mean brother?'

'I mean that it is the fiery worm that has stolen into the Eden of my heart; it has planted its poisonous fangs so deep, that time cannot tear them from me. It is the veriest curse of life. It saps the foundation of every moral virtue, and sears, with its baneful breath, the sweetest joys of life. It burns up every gentle emotion of the soul—stirs up the crushed dregs of every evil passion—till its victim becomes a mass of degradation. It lays like an incubus on the spirit, counting the trembling pulses of the brain—with maddening fury eating out the heart with its blistering venom. O! this damning draft—earth has no greater curse, nor hell a greater torment.'

Such was the language of one whose wife had become so wedded to the bottle, that he was compelled to give into the keeping of another, the child that should have been reared by the united labor of husband and wife. With much power, the gifted authoress follows the guilty Mrs. Ben Darby through her life of drunkenness. There are many chapters in the work I should like to see copied into your excellent magazine, but the limits I have allotted to myself will not permit me to do it. A few more extracts must suffice for the present; and at a future time I may send you a few more.

Mr. Darby's end was a fearful one. Stricken down by the hand of her drunken husband—a being for whom she had given up the husband of her youth—she was taken to the hospital to die, and there she was followed by her only child Eleanor, whom, for the sake of money, she had endeavored to sacrifice to the lust of a human fiend. That daughter bent over her like an angel of