

dancing, eating, or swimming, for the same purpose.* Perhaps the custom originated in the practice of offering libations at feasts to the gods, or to chiefs; or of pledging in ancient feudal times, when at a mingled feast of friends and foes, one guaranteed his neighbour's throat while drinking. Barbarous usages should cease with barbarous ages. At a time when the commons of France seemed drawing to a taste for ardent spirits, Louis XIV. had the good sense to perceive the effect that the drinking of healths, and other complimentary modes among the higher circles, produced upon the nation at large, and he disused the custom in his own case, and abrogated the former wine courtesies at his Court. The Church of Scotland, wisely remarking the dangerous tendency of "health-drinking," forbids the ceremony among its members: 'tis a pity that this prudent and Christian caution should every where be rebelled against † A great authority in this Church, Mr. Durham, observes, that "it is an uncouth and strange thing, and even unnatural, that neither a man's appetite, nor his health, nor the time of the day, nor his ordinary diet, shall be the reason or occasion of a man's drinking, or the rule whereby to try the convenient when or season of it: but whenever a man shall make such and such a bargain with me, or pay me for, or get payment from me of such and such things, that must be the rule of my eating and drinking! wh t beast would be thus dealt with? There is a drinking of healths—by this means forcing, tempting, or occasioning, drinking in others; this is one of the highest provocations to drunkenness. What can be the use of drinking healths? It was a notable saying of a great man, solicited to drink the King's health, 'By your leave, I will pray for the King's health, and drink for my own.' This practice will probably be found to have arisen from heathen idolaters, who used libations to Jovi, Baccho, &c.: it is certain there is no vestige for it in Christianity, nor any reason for it. ‡

"The system of toasts at public feasts is naughty: it would be difficult to discover the real connection that exists between wishing prosperity to a cause or an individual, and simultaneously swallowing wine, but it is not difficult to perceive, that an eloquent speech, or pathetic appeal, is in fact vitiated and degraded by adding a glass of punch to its conclusion. Perhaps the public will require, in this country, to be further indoctrinated into the mysteries and consequences of drinking usage, before they will submit to any direct invasion of the glorious British privilege of giving toasts at civic dinners. A few words in passing, however, may be thrown out on this topic. In connecting a sentiment, or expression of goodwill, of admiration or adherence, with liquor, a certain force is used on all the company, unfavourable to temperance and moral liberty. When gentlemen affirm, that now-a-days they are not required by convivial law to swallow bumpers, perhaps it would be fitting they should consider,

* See tour of a German Prince.

† Act of General Assembly, 13th June, 1646, No. XI.

‡ The Rev. Mr. Durham on the Tea Commandments.

that although incipient civilization on this point has begun to emancipate the upper ranks from such servitude, yet that large masses of the inhabitants are still enthralled on occasions, public and private, to "bumpers, true bumpers, real bumpers" of liquid fire; and *no heel tops*. Surely it is possible to make a speech at a public feast—to panegyricize a given character or system—to convey the most useful views of moral, political or literary truth—to breathe most hearty wishes for the welfare of any scheme or individual—without confirming all that has been said, and clenching it, by the unmeaning ceremony of swallowing a mouthful of liquor. Dispassionately considered, a declamation on the conduct of public affairs, with a glass of punch tugged to its end, is a combination nearly akin to the burlesque, and infuses a taint of doggerel into what might otherwise be a sublime appeal to the passions or the reason."

The reverend gentleman then concluded by offering, as Chairman of the meeting, and in the name of all Scotchmen present, their fraternal respect and esteem, to all their brethren of different countries attending the meeting—Englishmen—Irishmen—Americans and Canadians—although this was not accompanied with the usual bumper, yet the applause which followed seemed to testify that it was as sincerely received.

After the Chairman's address a hymn was sung by the choir; and the meeting then listened to an "Eulogy on Eminent Scotchmen," read by J. Dougall, Esq. This paper was one of great excellence, it contained many passages whose eloquence was of a high order—it gave just and original views of the character of many of the eminent men of Scotland, and was well fitted to lead the audience to imitate their virtues. We could not help thinking that it was a much more rational way of spending a Saint Andrew's celebration, to have our attention directed to the good and the great of our native land, than to spend it in riotous feasting. We give the following extract from this paper, not because it is the best passage which might be selected, but because it is the only one which alludes directly to the subject of Temperance:—

"The only other living Scotchmen whom I shall take leave to notice, are John Dunlop of Greenock, and William Collins of Glasgow,—men of practical philanthropy, who have struggled against almost incredible difficulties to arouse the nation to a sense of its danger, from the all prevailing custom of using intoxicating drinks. I spoke of the education which Scotchmen received, and the beneficial effects which it produced, but I

regret to say, that these effects were very often destroyed, by another sort of education which they received, namely, that of using and relishing intoxicating drinks. Yes, my friends, till recently this was part of the education of all classes in Scotland—and before this baneful custom we have often seen the brightest genius fall, and the most eminent virtues succumb. What is it that causes so many intelligent and well educated Scotchmen to run in foreign lands a short career of dissipation, ruin, and death, but the cure which was taken to initiate them into habits of drinking at home? When the men whom I named began their labours, the curse of intemperance hung above every class of the community; for usage and custom rendered it imperative on all classes to partake, upon almost every occasion, of a deadly, though slowly operating poison, till the chains of habit, prejudice, and appetite, were so firmly bound around the whole frame of society, that even such men as Dunlop and Collins must have shrunk from the task of breaking them, had they not been sustained by the Grace which is from on high. But thanks to the God whom they serve. Some links of the chain have been detached, and the whole mass must ere long fall to the ground, and leave our beloved country to run her race of benevolence, happiness, and glory, free and unfettered."

It was intended that the Rev. Mr. Bosworth should next address the meeting, but the lateness of the hour prevented his address from being received. Fruit was then handed round, the band playing in the meantime, and the meeting was dismissed after a few remarks from the Chair.

This was the most splendid meeting we have ever witnessed in Montreal—it must be regarded as a complete triumph to the cause of temperate and rational enjoyment. The object contemplated by those gentlemen with whom the meeting originated, has been completely accomplished, that is, it has been proved to the satisfaction of all, *that men can enjoy themselves at a public meeting without the excitement of intoxicating liquors*. To every person present, and there could not be fewer, we think, than 250, the evening was one of unmingled gratification—satisfaction and delight beamed in every countenance. We hope that a salutary influence will emanate from it,—that it will prevent the recurrence of *public dinners*, and will lead our citizens to celebrate their anniversaries in a manner which all will admit to be both more rational, and more conducive to morality, and which is now proved to be attended with greater enjoyment.