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 ow, time was  
 ow, as unconscious of  
 ment. By degrees, however, the  
 pleasant to them, so pleasant that  
 er to the point of danger; and then, as  
 en stated, the nearer they approached, the  
 more careless they grew whether they overstepped the line  
 er not. If, in such a situation, a human being could re-  
 tain the full possession of his senses, he would know that  
 the farther he advanced in such a course, the greater his  
 danger would be; but the very opposite of this being the  
 fact, and the perceptions of the intemperate man becoming  
 more dim in the exact proportion as his danger increases,  
 his case is one which claims, for this very reason, our es-  
 pecial sympathy and peculiar care. We should never for-  
 get, then, that the nearer the evil of drinking wine or any  
 other intoxicating beverage approaches to sin, the less the  
 mind perceives it, the less in short it is capable of under-  
 standing what sin is, so that by the time the point of dan-  
 ger is passed, there remains little ability to perceive that  
 it is so, and then a little further and a little further still,  
 and neither power nor inclination are left to return.

It may very properly be argued, that the individual who  
 has once been guilty of this breach of decorum and propri-  
 ety, must know that the intoxicating draught is dangerous  
 to him, whatever it may be to others. Unquestionably he  
 does, and he feels after having once fallen, more certain  
 that he will never fall again. He thinks he shall now  
 know where to stop for the remainder of his life, and he  
 begins again, very cautiously at first, congratulating him-  
 self after a great many successful efforts, upon having so  
 often stopped on the right side of danger. As his confi-  
 dence increases, however, he ventures further, for he has  
 acquired a taste for the indulgence, and he likes the stimu-  
 lus it gives to his animal frame, and the elasticity it im-  
 parts to his spirits. He likes, too, the feeling that he is  
 not bound, or shackled; that he is able to associate on equal  
 terms with other men, and can and dare do as he pleases.  
 In this mood then he passes again the point of danger, and  
 finds again, on returning to his senses, the folly and the  
 sin he has committed. Still, however, he is not cast  
 down. He has no more idea that he shall ever become an  
 irreclaimably intemperate man, than you have that the  
 drunkard's grave will be yours. He is quite sure that he  
 can stop when he likes. Society of the best kind, and  
 friends of the most respectable order, all tell him that he  
 can, and he is but too willing to believe it. With this as-  
 surance, they place before him the temptation. They invite  
 him to partake, and if he should by any strange misapplica-  
 tion of their kindness go too far, they wash their hands of  
 his guilt—it is *his*, and not theirs.\*

It is strange that sympathizing, benevolent, and well  
 disposed persons should be able to look upon individuals in  
 this state—should see their weakness and their temptation,  
 and yet never once think there is any thing due from  
 them towards a brother or a sister having just arrived at  
 such a crisis of their fate. Indeed we are all too back-  
 ward in offering advice or warning. We have much to  
 say, and often say it harshly, and with little charitable  
 feeling, when the case is decided; but the time to speak,  
 and to speak urgently—to speak kindly too, as brothers or  
 sister in weakness, and fellow travellers on the same path  
 —the time to speak with prayer and supplication—to speak  
 with the Bible in our hands, the eye of a righteous God  
 above us, and the grave, that long home to which we are  
 all hastening, beneath our feet—the time to speak thus,  
 is while the victim still lingers, before offering himself  
 up to the idol whose garlands of vine leaves are the badge  
 of death.

But suppose the friends of the poor tempted one do warn  
 him of his danger. Suppose they deal faithfully and af-  
 fectionately with him, and point out the rock on which he is in  
 danger of being wrecked. Suppose he sees that danger  
 too, and is brought to feel it as he ought, and purposes with  
 all sincerity of heart to avoid it for the rest of his life.  
 What follows? He mixes in society with the friends who  
 have warned him, and with others, who believe themselves  
 to be, and who probably are, perfectly safe. Every board  
 is supplied with the tempting draught. The hospitality of  
 the world requires that he, as well as others, should be  
 pressed to partake. Why should he not? He has no more  
 intention of partaking to excess than the most prudent per-  
 son present. So far from this, he is determined, resolute,  
 and certain that he will not exceed the limits of propriety.  
 He therefore joins his friends on equal terms; and who  
 shall say, if they are innocent, that he is not? It is true,  
 his crisis of danger has approached nearer to him, while  
 theirs remains as distant as before. It is true his power of  
 self-mastery is considerably decreased. It is true his  
 bodily inclination is opposed to his will. Yet so long as  
 other men, and good men too, nay, even delicate, correct,  
 and kind feeling women, are partaking of what is more  
 agreeable, and quite as necessary to him as to them, who  
 is there so ignorant of human nature, as to expect that such  
 a man, unaided, should be able to stop exactly at the point  
 where innocence ceases, and where guilt begins? Again  
 I repeat it, it is a mockery of common sense to look for  
 such a result, and it is cruelty to require it.

No; such are the usages of society, that an individual  
 in the state here described, is almost sure to plunge deeper  
 and deeper into the vice of intemperance, until in time he  
 grows a little too bad for that society to countenance or en-  
 dure. His early friends, those who set out with him in the  
 same career, then begin to look coldly upon him. They  
 wish he would not claim them as friends, at least in public.  
 He next falls out of employment; he is not eligible for any  
 place of trust; he begins to hang about, and his former ac-  
 quaintances endeavour to walk past him without catching  
 his eye. At last he becomes low,—his coat is thread-bare;  
 his hat is brown; he is a doomed man; his best friends  
 forsake him; the good point him out as a warning to the  
 bad; he is a terror to women, and a laughing stock to  
 children,—and such are the tender mercies of the world in  
 which we live!

It makes the heart ache to think how much has been said  
*against*—how little *for*—the victim of intemperance. We  
 see the degradation, the shame, the misery into which he has  
 fallen; but who is the witness of his moments of penitence,  
 his heart-struggles, his faint but still persevering resolves  
 —faint, because he has no longer the moral power to save  
 himself—*persevering, because he is not yet altogether lost?*  
 If there be one spectacle on earth more affecting than all  
 others, it is that of a human being mastered by temptation,  
 yet conscious that the vice to which he yields is a cruel

\* The extent and variety of temptation to which individuals are thus ex-  
 posed, is forcibly shown in an important and valuable work by John Dun-  
 lop, Esq., of the "Drinking Usage" of our country, a work which ought  
 to be in the hands of every patriotic Englishman.