

## TEMPERANCE.

## A WARNING AGAINST INTEMPERANCE.

BY THE REV. J. A. WALLACE.

OF the many vices which war against men's souls, and plunge them in perdition, there is none, perhaps, into which greater multitudes are betrayed, than that of intemperance; nor one from whose intolerable bondage fewer victims are ever privileged to escape. At the same time, it is somewhat remarkable that there is no vice which seems to yield the sovereignty over men's passions at an easier rate, or offers less by way of compensation for the hard servitude which it exacts. One might think that the loss of heaven, and the ruin of an immortal soul were not for a moment to be hazarded by any reasonable being for a thing of nought, and that no man would ever abandon himself to a habit which was fitted to entail upon him such tremendous evils in another world, without looking well to the furtherance of his own happiness in the present life, and thus making sure in the meantime of a rich and abundant recompense of reward.

Yet how different is the principle which regulates the conduct of the drunkard! Even in the present world, and putting eternity altogether out of the question, he seems of all men the most miserable; for he suffers the loss of health, of time, of character, of reputation, of usefulness, of property, of domestic comfort, of tranquility of conscience, of soundness of understanding, of fellowship with saints, of communion with God, of consolation in trial, of hope in death,—of every thing, in short, that appears necessary to his present felicity. And where then lies the gain, or what remains to reconcile him to the portion that awaits him beyond the grave?—Nothing that we are aware of but the experience of some pleasurable emotion which lasts only for a little. And what is that? It is nothing, or less than nothing, when weighed in the scales with the worth of a never-dying soul; and, moreover, it is succeeded for the most part with feelings of intolerable bitterness—feelings which, according to the drunkard's own testimony, are more than sufficient to cancel and counterbalance the liveliest of his joys. And not only so, but it is especially deserving of notice, that there is that in the constitution of his own nature, and in the wise ordinations of Almighty God, whereby it so happens that the very feelings of sensual enjoyment for the sake of which he is sacrificing so much, so far from being quickened into greater liveliness by every act of transgression, and thereby bringing in to him a larger amount of pleasure, does actually become more feeble, and less fitted to excite or to entertain him, just the oftener that he gives himself the indulgence of the evil passion. The craving indeed of his own depraved appetite may become keener and keener, the longer he continues in the service of sin, and for the purpose of pacifying its insatiable desires he may enlarge the measure of his indulgences, and make advances as rapid as they are ruinous in the path wherein destroyers go. But as if to lessen the force of temptation, or to demonstrate that he is altogether without excuse, his own susceptibility of enjoyment becomes weaker and weaker. And thus the same process which is throwing fuel into his burning passions, and imparting fresh strength and activity to his evil habits, is nevertheless removing him, day by day, to a greater distance from the transitory enjoyment which after all is his only recompense of reward.

Hence, it may be said of the confirmed drunkard, that he is truly realizing the expres-

sion of the Bible, but in a way very different from the experience of an apostle:—*he is dying daily*,—dying in body,—dying in quick sensitiveness of soul; and long before the breath is gone from his nostrils he may be dead,—dead not only to all things noble and divine, but dead in a measure even to the sensual enjoyment for which he has given over his immortal soul to perdition.

But though, in one sense, he is dead whilst he liveth, it is also true, in another sense, that he is alive whilst he is dead,—alive to all the means and devices and opportunities that present themselves for the indulgence of his keen and uncontrollable desires,—alive in proud and stern resistance to the messages of mercy and to the force of religious truth—alive in the tremendous and outrageous energy of passions which have gathered strength with every successive indulgence, and which in themselves are the most active, the most potent, and the most indestructible of all the elements that shall minister everlastingly to the feeding of the worm that never dies, and to the fostering of the fire that shall never be quenched.

We met sometime ago with what, perhaps, may be regarded as a somewhat striking exemplification of the foregoing remarks. It was the case of a man of grey hairs and of a venerable aspect, but who, though bending beneath the infirmities of age, and tottering on the brink of the grave, was still retaining the habits of a drunkard,—habits to which he had been long addicted. He was lying, when we last saw him, on the bed from which he was never more to arise. The shadows of the dark valley were gathering thickly around him. The solemn prospect of appearing in the presence of his Judge was just about to be realized. But there was no extinction of the ruling passion. The cravings of his spent and exhausted spirit was going out, amid the last agonies, for the intoxicating draught.—And though the miserable being had not strength to lift him from his bed, he prayed to his surrounding attendants to be indulged once more, and that with an agony and earnestness of mind as intense and overpowering as if he had been praying for the salvation of his soul. It was in vain to rouse him by the dread imagery of hell, or to soften him by the tender mercies of Christ, or to attract him by the radiant glories of heaven. He had given the rein to his passions, and his passions had gained the mastery. Even to the last hour, and at the very gates of death, they were lordling it over him with a tyranny which he had not the power to resist. And thus he died!

It was a solemn spectacle. Even the memory of it makes the heart shudder. But we forbear to dwell upon it. Nor shall we presume to intrude into the secrecies of eternity, or to follow the spirit to its doom. The spirit has returned unto Him who trieth all hearts, and who judgeth righteous judgment, and with Him we leave it.

The mortal remains we accompanied to their final resting-place. It seemed the saddest of funerals. Yet we could have wished when the last ceremony was over, that the very ashes had been permitted to repose in peace—that he had been left alone in his grave. But so it was not. In the lapse of a brief interval, his grave was opened. It was to lay another by his side. And who was he? Oh, hapless youth! He was the only son of that aged man, the prop of his declining years, the last of his family. Not long ago, he was rejoicing in the flower and vigor of his youth, of propossessing manners, of active habits, with fair prospects, a worshipper in the assemblies of God's people, a mem-

ber of the visible Church of Christ. But, alas! the vice of the father became the vice of the son; and then his course was not only sad, but it was soon finished. His place in the house of God was forsaken. His business was neglected. His shop was eventually closed. At last the violence of disease confined him to his dwelling, and to his dying bed; and left to the compassion of strangers and of hirelings, without a friend to counsel or to comfort him, with his door closed against the offered ministration of his pastor, he also died, and was buried!

The dust of the old man, and the ashes of his once promising son, are now lying side by side in the same silent grave!

Silent, did we say! We recall the word. There is a voice that seems to issue from the very dust of that extinct and ruined family, and the tenants of that melancholy grave, dead though they be, seem yet to be speaking; the one to the old, for he went down with grey hairs to the grave; the other to the young, for he was cut down, and withered amid the freshness of his youth. And the voice sayeth unto one, unto all—Take warning. Watch against temptation. Resist the first motions of corruption from within; and if from without sinners entice thee, consent thou not: for the service of sin is slavery, and the wages thereof is death—death temporal—death spiritual—death eternal!

## THE TRAVELLER.

## A VISIT TO MOUNT SINAI.

BY R. K. PINGLE, ESQ.

Our party consisted of three English and one Indian gentlemen, and we set sail in a little open boat for Tor, on the African side of the Red Sea, about one hundred and fifty miles below Suez. We expected to reach it the following day, and had laid in provision and water accordingly. Our little boat was laden to the water's edge with grain for the monks of Mount Sinai, in charge of which were two Greeks who understood little of seamanship, and our only efficient crew were an Arab sailor and an Abyssinian slave. We had a deck of about six feet square, without any covering for our party to sit, eat, and sleep on, and my Hindoostanee servant cooked for us in the fore part of the boat. The first two days our progress was retarded by calms, and we rolled about during the forenoon under a burning sun, and anchored for the night within a stone's cast of the shore, the Arab having no compass, and being afraid to stand out to sea in the dark; but we were unable to land on account of the coral reefs, and had therefore to compose ourselves to sleep as we best could, wrapped in our cloaks on our narrow planks, but in this attempt we were severely disturbed by numerous little nameless fellow-passengers, of whom you happily know nothing in our own dear country, but which abound in this part of the world. The third day we beat up and down, making little way, against a head-wind and high sea, and after anchoring as usual for the night, tied on the following day to get out under a strong though favourable breeze, but in the attempt our rotten tackle gave way, and our main-sail was blown to shivers: in this predicament, the Greeks being useless from fear, and the two others hardly knowing what to do, we were only saved from being driven on the coral rocks by the activity and coolness of an Irish gentleman in our party, who cut the ropes with his knife, and managed to rig up a smaller sail in a few seconds. After getting clear out, however, we could make little way, from the violence of the gale and the scantiness of our rigging, but managed to anchor for the night in a place where we could get on shore, and pitch a little tent we had with us; and fortunately we were soon followed by another Arab vessel of much larger size, and with a better crew and rigging, and which was the only one we had seen since we left Suez. Our provisions and water were by this time reduced to a low ebb, and the whole of the neighbouring coast was an uninhabited sandy desert, (the wilderness of Shur) where it was impossible to get them replenished, the only spring we knew of, and that