



AND

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HEARTS RESOLVED AND HANDS PREPARED, THE BLESSINGS THEY ENJOY TO GUARD.—SMOLLET.

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POEMBY.

THE VAUDOIS VALLEYS.

BY MRS. HEMANS.

Yes! thou hast met the sun's last smile
From the haunted hills of Rome;
By many a bright Egean isle
Thou hast seen the billows foam:

From the silence of the Pyramid
Thou hast watch'd the solemn flow
Of the Nile, that with his mantle hid
The ancient realm below:

Thy neart hath burn'd as shepherd sangs
Some wild and warlike strain,
Where the Moorish horn once proudly rang
Through the pealing hills of Spain:

And o'er the lonely Grecian streams
Thou hast heard the laurels moan,
With a sound yet murmuring in thy dreams
Of the glory that is gone.

But go thou to the hamlet-vales
Of the Alpine mountains old,
If thou wouldst hear immortal tales
By the wind's deep whispers told!

Go if, thou lov'st the soil to tread
Where man hath bravely striven,
And life like incense hath been shed
An offering unto Heaven!

For o'er the snows and round the pines
Hath swept a noble flood,
The nurture of the peasant's vines
Hath been the martyr's blood.

A spirit, stronger than the sword,
And loftier than Despair,
Through all th' heroic region pour'd,
Breathes in the generous air.

A memory clings to every steep
Of long-enduring Faith,
And the sounding streams glad records keep
Of courage unto death!

Ask of the peasant where his sires
For Truth and Freedom bled,
Ask, where were lit the torturing fires
Where lay the holy dead?

And he will tell thee all around,
On fount, and turf, and stone,
Far as the chamois' foot can bound,
Their ashes have been sown.

Go when the sabbath-bell is heard
Up through the wilds to float,
When the dark old woods and caves are stirr'd
To gladness by the note:

When forth' along their thousand rills,
The mountain people come,
Join thou their worship on those hills
Of glorious Martyrdom!

And while the song of praise ascends,
And while the torrent's voice
Like the swell of many an organ blends,
Then let thy soul rejoice!

Rejoice, that human hearts, through scorn,
Through grief, through death, made strong,
Before the rocks and heavens have borne
Witness of God so long.

A hoary drunkard boasted that
he had gone to bed drunk, nightly,
for 40 years and upwards, and was
still comparatively hale and sound.

A bystander inquired of him, 'Where, where are all your boon-companions gone? The bacchanal whispered him, 'I have seen seven generations of them all to their graves, and am settling the eighth very quickly, for I lost three companions last month, and one very good fellow to-day.' In general, however, the process is that of a very few years, when it arrives at the point of destruction, generally lasting so long as to have seen the ruin of the circumstances of the unfortunate, and all the fell train of domestic miseries which ever follow in the rear of inebriation. There is, however, a period in the progress of the disease which I do not include in this estimate,—the silent unobtrusive, and hardly observed stage of every drunkard's progress, the few years in which he drinks temperately, respectably and regularly, and drinks on almost all occasions below the point of intoxicating. It is from this practice of regular and respectable drinking, that is derived all the tendencies of drunkenness; and the drunkards of every successive year are those who, the season before, were the respectable drinkers. Thus drunkenness, like covetousness, does not at once come up to its consummation of iniquity, but creeps on in its progress, from little and little, till at least the vice is as a second nature, and forms a part of the constitution. The victims of the disease, then, of a sudden, find themselves affected with it. They at first drink only a sociality, and nightly unite a sense of animal gratification with the kindly interchange of good humour and good fellowship. 'But there is a law in our animal economy, that when the action either of a part or of the whole system is increased beyond the standard of health, a state of collapse, weakness or loss of action, proportionate to the degree of previous excitement, is produced.' And every successive time this stimulus is applied, it requires a greater proportional quantity to produce a given effect. This law is as invariable as the other. Thus, in the progress of the drunkard, there is constantly going on an increasing necessity of excitement, and also an hourly diminution of energy: the progress of constitutional deterioration, and the necessity of new causes of injury to the frame, both advancing with a steady step of destruction. The vital powers become at last, to a certain extent, exhausted; the natural and healthful excitants of the system no longer keep it in comfort; and the fatal necessity of perpetual stimulation is fully formed before the unfortunate tippler is aware that he is a drunkard.

Look at the living drunkard,

and you will find him only the remnant of his former self. His immortal mind is not less blighted by this withering curse than his dying body. His memory, once retentive and ready, has lost its wonted elasticity and power. His understanding, which could once grasp, and wield, and elucidate almost any subject, becomes debilitated and childish. In his cups, the drundard is generally a temporary fool or madman. His very horse exhibits the external symbols of mortification for the load he carries, and his dog is ashamed to keep his master company. But idiotism and insanity are not always temporary in the case of the drunkard. Both of these effects often become permanent in the future man. Idiots may be found almost everywhere, who have brought this calamity upon themselves by the immoderate use of ardent spirits. From men of intellect, and men of business, and perhaps men of pre-eminent attainments, they have debased themselves to a common level with the swine. In some cases reason seems to be blotted out, and the miserable victim of intemperance lives and dies a literal fool. In other cases still more numerous, there is a manifest approximation to idiotcy, where this deplorable consequence does not actually follow. Who has not witnessed the wane of intellect around him? Who has not seen the shrewd accountant become dull, the profound philosopher rendered obtuse; the arch politician bewildered; the eager flight of the learned advocate flag; and that precocity of genius which, in the dawn of life, attracted the steady gaze, and promised a giant manhood, dwindle into mental insignificance and leath? The world may, perhaps, stand and wonder at the change, and speculate upon the latent cause. But lift the curtain, and the mystery is solved. There stands the bottle, and the death of intellect is in it. Trace the effects of this habit upon the talents, and learning, and prospects of a young man of early promise; fix your eye upon one who is gifted with as fine a mind as was ever moulded by the hand of heaven; and let him become addicted to his cups; and let him continue to suck and suck at the bottle, and he will ultimately possess (to borrow an allusion from Dr. Rush) just about the intellect of a CALF.

Again, spirits have been always celebrated as good preventives of the bad effects of exposure to cold and wet, and as the best means of enabling men to undergo them. This also is a delusion. Every recent experiment which has been made upon the subject demonstrates most clearly, that men when, exposed to extreme cold and wet,

undergo their sufferings longer and with less injury upon simple water only, than when supplied with spiritous liquors. Dr. Trotter's experiments upon sailors, on the tops, in cold nights, for hours together, were uniformly in favour of the men who had taken no spirits. The Roman soldiers, natives of the mild regions of Italy, conquered the world without the use of spirits. No soldiers ever underwent greater fatigues or surmounted greater difficulties; but whether scorching on the sands of Egypt, or freezing on the passage of the Alps, whether in forced and incredibly long marches, and in heavy armour for weeks together, such as a modern spirit-drinker could not even carry, or in the toil and perid of the battle-field, they uniformly served without even an allowance of wine, a little vinegar and water being their only refreshment; and these were the men who conquered the world!!! Let us hear no more, then, of the necessity of alcohol to labour. Let us not bride our servants to unnatural exertion by giving them such stimulants. We are not warranted in extracting from our fellow-creatures, by such destructive means, any unnatural temporary exertions; and, if there are permanent servants, we will always find that the detriment will recoil upon ourselves, if not in the breaking down of their health, at least in the deterioration of their habits. Are we not guilty of the blood of these men, who tempt them on to their ruin, by this constant practice of bibbing them with liquor for every act of service, or of procuring some short temporary exertion from its aid?

The celebrated Dr. Hunter gave one of his children a full glass of sherry every day after dinner for a week. The child was then about four years old, and had never been accustomed to wine. To another child, nearly of the same age, and under similar circumstances, he gave a large orange, for the same space of time. At the end of the week he found a very material difference in the pulse, heat of body and state of the bowels of the two children. In the first the pulse was quickened, the heat increased, and the bowels deranged, whilst the second had ever appearance that indicated high health. He then reversed the experiment: to the first-mentioned child he gave the orange, and the other the wine. The effects followed as before: a striking and demonstrative proof of the pernicious effects of vinous liquors on the functions of life, in a state of full health. Now this is the effect of the regular use of a comparatively mild and weak substance on the stomach of a young human being. The very same