

TEMPERANCE SOIREEES.

It seems to us that throughout the infinite variety of matter over which our leisure thoughts revolve, there is no one subject, however novel in its nature it may at first sight appear, which has not been trenched and furrowed by some grub in the field of literature, and the result of an investigation of the principles upon which those modern *exotics*, which have emanated from the successful exertions of the benevolent originators of Temperance Societies, is, that a short essay on the advantages possessed by *Temperance Soirees* will only place us among the number incessantly digging about the same tender roots; or at most, that our remarks will be of a mediatorial nature, softening down and harmonizing the conflicting sentiments of the various orders of which society is made up.

Although we are not of those who consider the presence of the good things of life in either a solid or a liquid state, essential to the "feast of reason and the flow of soul," yet we do not condemn in toto the use of the more substantial and less offensive luxuries of the day on the occasion of social meetings. We have not unfrequently indulged ourselves in a smile at the ostentation of a professedly benevolent association, which, while under the patronage of a tutelar saint, and distributing relief to the suffering pauper, allows, and even enforces the indulgence by its members, in the immoderate consumption of meat and drink; but we have always found a partial excuse for the custom in the observation that the laudable views of the more humane, who need no stimulant beyond the wish to administer relief, could not be sufficiently carried out, unless by enlisting in the cause the means of such as are more impervious to the cry of despairing poverty; and to do this it is necessary to make a pampered and disordered appetite the medium of success. But we have not been altogether satisfied with this apology, nor should our scruples be wholly removed even by the disappearance of the intoxicating beverage from the social board. It was with the most lively feelings of pleasure therefore that we took advantage of the opportunity afforded a short time since, of attending a soiree on the temperance principle. On every side sparkled the "virtuous eye of beauty," amid the germs of sociality, which, though inherent in our nature are too often poisoned by the noisome prejudices incessantly inculcated by little minds in the superabundance of their infectious pride.— Here all met on neutral ground; each feeling disposed to contribute his quota of skill in the art of music for the gratification of his neighbour; and all seemed convinced that the proceedings of the evening tended to a revolution in public taste, and a more innocent and refined mode of relaxation from the devouring cares of life. There was not heard the noisy bacchanalian; the eye met not at every glance the offensive leer of the sot, or the pernicious fire that flashes in the eye and riots in the cheek of the youthful aspirant to precocious manhood.

We say we were delighted, because although the tea table with its appendages formed as great an attraction to the many as the sweet

sounds floating around them;—yet we are not blind to the fact that all innovations on the system of society must be moderately introduced. Some refreshments were undoubtedly necessary, as the hour of assembling was an early one: and we think that the abundance and variety that prevailed proceeded as well from policy as from a desire to meet the expectations of the most fastidious lover of good things.

We observed no exclusive clubs, no invidious coteries in the room. It seemed as if the principle which actuates the supporters of temperance societies, had opened the springs of the human heart and that the waters of charity, love, order and good fellowship had gushed out with whelming force, and swept away the monstrous affectation into which has so long been sunk.

It may be inquired, what necessity is there for such gatherings; we answer, that all classes of the community may here meet on an equal footing; we answer that it induces harmony throughout the face of society, and renders each member of that society more contented with the sphere in which it has pleased Providence to place him; that the barrier which is placed between rich and poor and which is strengthened by the haughty reserve of the former, is proportionally broken down by the observance of a different line of conduct, and that the government of a country thus happily peopled must receive an addition to its stability whatever may be its form. In conclusion we have to regret the tardiness of innovation on the present system of national societies, and to express a hope that ere long they may be reduced to consistency in their proceedings.

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