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THE RUINED ARTIZAN.

There is not, perhaps, a more painful spectacle in this world, than to behold an intelligent, active, skilful workman, in any department of labour, able to turn himself to almost any species of work, capable of earning a high wage, maintaining a respectable position, yet constantly in beggary from the vile habit of drinking, whenever the favorite beverage can be got. The pain in witnessing such a spectacle is all the more increased when we have made personal sacrifices, and done what we could to place such a workman again and again in a fair way of doing. In such a case there is the pain arising from disappointment and ingratitude blended together.

These remarks have been suggested by many instances that we have known of the most clever and skilful workmen deplorably given to the habit of drinking—men that might have been an ornament to their country by their powers of invention, and their skill and facility in execution, and yet their sobriety could never be depended upon for a single day; and a small job, though begun, might be frequently interrupted, till useless for its purpose by fits of intemperance.

Is it not truly painful to witness a skilful artizan, clever, original, managing in everything but the one thing of taking care of his money and himself? And yet it is not very long ago since the feeling was quite common, at least in a part of the country well known to ourselves, that the only clever workmen were really those who were most frequently drunk. The man who could drink was, ten to one, the man who could himself most readily and ingeniously turn his hand to every kind of job. The same idea was also entertained

regarding those who attempted poetry. All those who presumed to climb Parnassus, or drink of the waters of Helicon, must first *souse* themselves in the muddy contents of the beer barrel, if they could afford nothing stronger, or, if they could, they must first quaff inspiration from the mountain dew. Such ideas are not yet exploded; there are many who still labour under the delusion, that any great mental effort, whether in art or literature, requires to be begun and conducted under the influence of strong stimulants. We believe this is a very erroneous impression, and we have no hesitation in saying that the most vigorous, and pure, and manly sentiments of Burns were composed when his intellect was clear, and neither clouded nor excited by intoxicating draughts. The natural fervour of his soul did not require them. Neither can we doubt for one moment that Christopher North, now that he is a practical abstainer, could be quite as fresh, yea, more so, amongst the mountains, and could wield his fishing-rod, his gun, or his pen with more precision and vigor than ever, and furnish to Maga as much keen cutting criticism, as much pithy racy humour, as much healthy moral sentiment, as many "Noctes Ambrosianæ;" yea, we would expect more than ever he did in days when highland glens and Glenlivet were to him so dear.

But it was our intention, in these few remarks, principally to depict the effects of drinking on skilful, talented, but infatuated artizans. Why is it that many of them are so deplorably intemperate? Their cleverness, their skill, their adaptation for almost every job are certainly not the result of their drinking, but their drinking habits have been entailed upon them indirectly on account of the superior facilities which they possess in doing almost anything. We say indirectly for their talents are certainly not to be blamed for making them drunkards, else woe be to the talented and skilful workman. But their talents and skill have unfortunately, in such a country as this, been the means of bringing them more than they would have been brought, under the influence of the drinking customs of the country. It is with the talented workman as it is with the punster and the wit, or the man that can tell a good story, or pass a capital joke, or keep the whole table in a roar. Such a man is frequently invited to parties for the sake of his pleasing companionship, and then he must drink. And such a workman is frequently presented with extra jobs for which drink is the only payment. Nothing can be more pernicious to the workman than such false kindness—yea, rather let us call it deliberate cruelty—