

trifling, to be noticed or checked. If it were any thing great it would be worth the while, but the thought is, that there is no danger; yet, that there will be none for long. But danger there is; it is the beginning of a course of what is wrong, and 'fearful may be the after deviations.'

While this is true of all sin, how especially true is it of the sin of drunkenness? Had Dr. Hamilton been writing of it alone, he could not have employed terms more to the point. How common is it for persons to say, 'there is no danger.' The fact of their saying so is a proof of danger. There is a 'wrong direction' given to the thought and feeling, when any one cherishes the idea that he can partake of intoxicating drinks, and be safe. This idea puts him off his guard, and he is in the exact circumstances to go on with their use till he becomes their victim. This is the point at which we would begin. We would wish to impress all with the conviction that they are in danger, that they cannot tell to what a fearful extent they may go. Could we get all impressed with this conviction, the object at which we aim would be, in a great measure gained; for being forewarned they would be forearmed, and every one who had a regard to his own welfare, feeling that there was danger in partaking at all, would totally abstain. To this first wrong direction of thought and feeling, in regard to intoxicating drinks, is to be traced the great prevalence of intemperance. From the first dawning of intelligence, the child has presented to him every thing calculated to give this wrong direction to his thought and feeling, and as he grows up, he is still farther led on in the same direction. He is taught to regard the use of such drinks as not only safe, but advantageous and desirable; and who can wonder if, with such views and feelings, when he goes forth into the world his own master, he should enter on the use of these drinks, if he has not already begun it, and led on by the customs of society, should continue to use them till he unconsciously becomes their victim? Alas! how often has such a case been realised.

This first wrong direction of thought and feeling, minute as many might regard it, removes every thing like a barrier to the use of the drink; rather, we ought to say, it encourages the employment of it. Beginning, or prosecuting the voyage of life, 'the voyager,' by this wrong direction of thought and feeling, is entering on the use of intoxicating drinks, 'enters a current which seems propitious, there is no apparent diversion from his course, his bark speeds well, his oar does not toil, nor his sail strain. In his confidence all promises success.' Life goes merrily on. Around him social companions gather, and encourage him in his progress. Business, he thinks, so far from being hindered, is greatly helped by it. It appears to aid him in his course onwards, and not only to make his own life more cheerful, comfortable, and happy, but to render him more agreeable to others. Success seems wonderfully associated with it, owing to the customs so prevalent in society. In high hope, he feels confident all is right, and that prosperity is sure. Something calls him to examination. It may be, some one of whom he could never have thought it, has been discovered by him to have a liking for strong drinks. It cannot be that he himself can come to such a condition. No, 'while he examines scarcely does it seem that he has advanced' in any love for drink. He resolves to keep a watch, and the result is, that 'much, again and again, reminds him of what he has noticed just before.' Still he discovers 'a strange familiarity' with these things. He cannot account for it, but he moves onwards as he did. He feels sure that he is safe and that all goes well. 'Still current flows into current, while onward and buoyant is his track.' Many speak of him as a prosperous man, and a hospitable, happy, agreeable companion, and cheer him in his course. A few, however, begin to fear that he is in the vortex of dissipation. To himself it does not seem so. He might indeed find, that now he partakes

more freely than ever he did long ago; but there is no perceptible difference between the present year and the past, or the present month and the preceding, and there is scarcely any between the last, and the one before it—so gradual, in truth, has been the progress, that it was scarcely discernible and could only be fully known by a contrast between the condition now, and what it was a considerable time previous, but that is a test not applied. All, he concludes, must be safe. 'Soon, however, he feels an unnatural vibration,' there is a tremulous movement in his frame, a restlessness in his feeling. Something is wanting, he cannot tell what, for he cannot think it is the drink, but to it he betakes himself, and now his course is rapid. To it again and again he goes. Onwards and onwards he is borne resistlessly. 'Where he glided, he now whirls, along.' Many notice it now, but he himself seems to be in a great measure unconscious, or rather, we ought to say, he feels he is wrong, but has not yet fully discovered how or where. At last 'the truth seizes him, he is sweeping a whirlpool. Long since, he has entered the verge of a maelstrom, and he is now the sport of its gyrations.' With the discovery of his danger he feels himself helpless. 'No power is left his helm or mast, he is the trembling, unresisting prey. He hears the roar, he is drawn into the suck of the vortex.' He sees the end, and he shudders at it. He is a drunkard, and a drunkard's doom is before him. He is hurried on, knowing now that he is so. 'Not only the circle lessens, the very surface slopes;' not only is there a power drawing him onwards, but he himself sinks farther down toward the abyss. Not only can he not resist the suck of the vortex, but his own tendency is towards the fearful cauldron. 'The central funnel and abyss, dark-heaving, smooth, vitreous, yawns.' The mariner sees it, and feeling that he must be engulfed in its waters, shrieks wildly at the terrible fate that is before him. 'The skiff is swallowed up, where the waters only separate to close, where the outermost attraction was but the minister to the famine of this devouring maw.'

Ah! what a termination to the voyage of life! The heart bleeds to think it has been that of millions. Tens of thousands are on their way to it. They are within the whirl, they are close upon the central funnel, they are rushing on with tremendous rapidity, they are sliding down the sloping side. Can nothing be done to save them? Shall hundreds on hundreds, and thousands on thousands, be devoted in that terrible abyss? Who cries not for their rescue? Who is not willing to attempt it, at almost any sacrifice? Can they be delivered? Some of them may. O if it were only one—just one—that were worth all effort, and all self-denial. Can one be saved? Yes, many have already been saved.—A band of men and women have united together, in dependence on the help of God, to use their efforts for their rescue, and they have been blessed. With perfect safety to themselves they have seen those even who were almost at the very last whirl, who were almost uttering the last shriek—they have seen these rescued; and those thus rescued have joined, with all their heart, to rescue others. They have brought them without the very outermost circle, and have been the means of keeping them there; and in order to do this, they have kept without that circle themselves. They feel, however, that so long as encouragement is afforded by the kind, the benevolent, the respectable, and the Christian, to go within the influence of the vortex, and countenance given, for a certain length, to those who do enter; and that so long as these refuse to join those who seek their rescue, few can be delivered. They urge these, while yet they have themselves the power, to come without that circle—for they are within it—to do so, and lend their aid in rescuing others. They urge them to this, as they regard the welfare of their fellow-men—as they would carry out the self-denying principles of the gospel—as they would not bring upon themselves their brother's blood; nay, they tell them that so long as they themselves are within the whirl,