

Poetry.

The following graphic sketch discovers much genius, and a personal experience in which many a once prospered man can heartily sympathize. It should be printed on a large handbill, widely scattered, and posted in steamboats and public places:

**"BEHIND" AND "BEFORE" THE DRUNKERY
"SCREEN."**

BY JOHN D. ROSS.

[Author of "Pen and Ink Sketches,"]

Before and behind,—before and behind!
'Twere well if we oft felt inclined
To keep these two little words in mind
That are pregnant with joy or sorrow;
Many a tale of weal or of woe
This brace of significant syllables show,
From which we may all, as through life we go,
Instruction and warning borrow.

For instance—look at the gaudy *screen*
 Which stands the bar and the street between,
 To prevent Death's doings from being seen

By the passers-by on the paving:
Before it Sobriety gravely goes
 With its cheek of bloom, and its lip of rose;
Behind it, Drunkenness brews its woes,
 Bodies and souls depraving

"*Before and behind! behind and before!*"
 I heard a toper once muttering o'er
 The words;—and a rueful phiz he wore
 As he chimed the syllables over;
Before I drank of the liquid flame,
 I had health and wealth and a right good name,
 I knew not sorrow, disease, and shame;
 In fact, I was living in clover.

Before the screen I'd a purse well lined—
 A contented heart and a cheerful mind;
 I had pleasure *before* I went *behind*,
Before—but ah! never after;
Behind it, my money went day by day,
 My pleasures, like summer birds, flew away;
Behind it I darkened my mental ray,
 And shrieked out my mirthless laughter.

Behind, *behind*, and nothing *before*,
 But a prison cell or a workhouse door,
 A bundle of rags on a creaking floor,
 In lieu of flock or of feather;
 Behindhand with payments when bills were due;
 Behindhand with cash and credit too;
Before no fire when the fingers were blue
 In the keen December weather!

Before the bar, but *behind* the times;
 Behindhand when sounded the early chimes,
 When Industry wakens, and toils, and climbs
 Up the rugged ascent of Duty;
 Behindhand when little ones cried for bread;
 Behindhand with board, and best of trade;
 But *before* me a wife with a *drooping* head,
 Whose anguish had marred her beauty.

Trouble and turmoil, and torture and gloom!
Behind all light, and *before*, no bloom;
 With no Angel sitting upon the tomb,
 To rob it of half its terrors;
 Behindhand when Sabbath bells stirred the air;
 Before no altar to offer there
 The incense of praise, and the voice of prayer,
 For pardon of sins and errors.

Before the judge; and *before* one knows,
 Knocked down by the law's tremendous blows,
And behind the bars, which in dismal rows
 Stand in front of our human cages;

Behind the dismal curtain which hangs,
 Where Remorse, the devil, infixes his fangs,
 Inflicting on Earth internal pangs,
 As instalment of Satan's wages.

Behindhand always, and want before,
 And a surly voice crying out "no more!"
 For the *Rum*seller never chalks up a score,
 When he knows the last cent's expended.
 No eye to pity—no hand to save,
 As the victim is tossed upon misery's wave,
 Leaving nothing *behind* when he seeks the grave,
 But the fate of a tragedy ended.

Behind his coffin no mourners go,
 And when the clods on his corpse they throw,
 Folks say—"I thought it would be just so!"
 Then that Toper fell to thinking:—
 Oh I never felt so *behind*, *before*,
 Said he, as he turned from the bar-room door;
 And memory painted the smiles he wore
Before he had taken to drinking.

Behind—oh! the drink has left nothing *behind*,
 But a breaking heart and a clouded mind,
 And a serpent round life's flowers entwined,
 And a horrible shadow o'er me.
 But I'll quit the cup, and no more be seen
 Where the Rumseller plies his vocation mean,
 And blinded no more *behind* the "screen,"
 Have a sun-bright path *before* me.

We may wisdom learn from the simplest thing,
 If reason will only expand her wing,
 Even where Error lies coiled with its venomous sting,
 And it's not very hard to find it;
 A simple contrast like this may teach,
 As well as an elegant Temperance speech;
 So *before* the screen let me beg and beseech
 You never to go *behind* it.

THE DRUNKARD'S GRAVE.

BY W. OLAND BOURNE.

A low rough mound, half-sodded, marked a grave:
 No stone was there to tell the sleeper's name—
 No flowers sprang up to speak of Christian hopes—
 No Ann-ranrh was there, the chosen type
 Of immortality and cloudless bliss—
 No hallowing thoughts awoke, like those that spring
 Unbidden in the soul's spontaneous flow
 When sacred ties are broken, and the thought
 Turns to the urn of one whose image-throne
 Is like a holy shrine where memory sighs—
 No drooping willow bowed its weeping head—
 No tear-dew glistened on an ivy-bloom—
 No sorrower linger'd round the lonely mound—
 Forsaken—still—it was a drunkard's grave.

MIS-SPENT TIME.

BY SIR AUBRY DEVERE.

There is no remedy for time mis-spent—
 No healing for the waste of idleness,
 Whose very languor is a punishment
 Heavier than active soul can feel or guess.
 O, hours of indolence and discontent,
 Not now to be redeem'd! ye sting not less
 Because I know this span of life was lent
 For loftier duties, not for selfishness;
 Not to be whiled away in aimless dreams,
 But to improve ourselves and serve mankind,
 Life and its choicest faculties were given.
 Man should be ever better than he seems,
 And shape his acts and discipline his mind,
 To walk adorning earth with hope of heaven.