

Selected.

[From the U. C. Independent Examiner.]

ON INTEMPERANCE.

A small Volume was handed us lately, containing discourses on the nature, occasion, signs, evils, and remedy of intemperance, by Lyman Beecher, D. D.

We have great pleasure in making extracts from this eloquent and impressive little volume. The evils of intemperance are pointed out, in language glowing and animated; and the picture, which the author draws of that all-destroying vice, is but too strictly true to nature. Throughout these discourses, there appears an ardent piety, struggling to arrest the progress of this besetting sin, to reclaim the habitual drunkard, and to point out to the incautious, the many delusive snares in which they may be taken, till they become hardened and hacknied in the slavish bondage of this destroyer of the human race—habitual intoxication.—Ed.

Proverbs, xxiii. 29—35.

A resort to ardent spirits as a means of invigorating the intellect, or of pleasurable sensations, is also intemperance. It is a restraint upon nature, to exert in a short time, those results of mind and feeling, which in her own unimpelled course would flow with less impetuosity, but in a more equitable and healthful current. The mind has its limits of intellectual application, and the heart its limits of feeling, and the nervous system of healthful exhilaration; and whatever you gain through stimulus, by way of anticipation, is only so much intellectual and vital power cut off at the latter end of life.—It is this occult intemperance, of daily drinking, which generates a host of bodily infirmities and diseases: loss of appetite—nausea at the stomach—disordered bile—obstructions of the liver—jaundice—dropsy—hoarseness of voice—coughs—consumptions—rheumatic pains—epilepsy—gout—colic—palsy—apoplexy—insanity—are the body guards which attend intemperance, in the form of tipping, and where the odious name of drunkenness may perhaps be never applied.

A multitude of persons, who are not accounted drunkards, create diseases, and shorten their days, by what they denominate a "prudent use of ardent spirits." Let it therefore be engraven upon the heart of every man, that the daily use of ardent spirits, in any form or in any degree, is intemperance. Its effects are certain, and deeply injurious, though its result may be slow, and never be ascribed to the real cause. It is a war upon the human constitution, carried on ostensibly by an auxiliary, but which never fails to subtract more vital power than it imparts. Like the letting out of water by little and little, the breach widens, till life itself is poured out. If all diseases which terminate in death, could speak out at the grave, or tell their origin upon the coffin-lid, we should witness the most appalling and unexpected disclosure. Happy the man, who so avoids the appearance of evil, as not to shorten his days by what he may call the prudent use of ardent spirits.

But we approach now a state of experience, in which it is supposed generally that there is some criminal intemperance. I mean when the empire of reason is invaded, and weakness and folly bear rule; prompting to garrulity, or sullen silence; inspiring petulance, or anger, or insipid good humour, and silly conversation; pouring out oaths, and curses, or opening the storehouse of secrets, their own and others. And yet, by some, all these have been thought insufficient evidence to support the charge of drinking, and to justify a process of discipline before the church. The tongue must falter, and the feet must trip, before, in the estimation of some, professors of religion can be convinced of the crime of intemperance.

To a just and comprehensive knowledge, however, of the crime of intemperance, not only a definition is required, but a philosophical analysis of its mechanical effects upon the animal system.

To those who look only on the outward appearance, the triumphs of intemperance over conscience, and talents, and learning, and character, and interest, and family endearments, have appeared wonderful. But the wonder will cease, when we consider the raging desire which it enkindles, and the hand of torment which it lays, on every fibre of the body and faculty of the soul.

The stomach is the great organ of accelerated circulation to the blood, of elasticity to the animal spirits, of pleasurable or painful vibration to the nerves, of vigor to the mind, and of fulness to the cheerful affections of the soul. Here is the silver cord of life, and the golden bowl at the fountain, and the wheel at the cistern; and as these fulfil their duty, the muscular, and mental, and moral powers act in unison, and fill the system with vigor and delight. But as these sensual energies are enfeebled, the strength of mind and body declines, and lassitude, and depression, and melancholy, and sighing, succeed to the high beatings of health, and the light of life becomes as darkness.

Experience has decided, that any stimulus applied steadily to the stomach, which raises its muscular tone above the point at which it can be sustained by food and sleep, produces, when it has passed away, debility—a relaxation of the over-worked organ, proportioned to its preternatural excitement. The life-giving power of the stomach falls of course as much below the tone of cheerfulness and health, as it was injudiciously raised above it. If the experiment be repeated often, it produces an artificial tone of stomach, essential to cheerfulness and muscular vigor, entirely above the power of the regular sustenance of nature to sustain, and creates a vacuum, which nothing can fill, but the destructive power which made it—and when protracted use has made the difference great, between the natural and this artificial tone, and habit has made it a second nature, the man is a drunkard, and, in

ninety-nine instances in a hundred, is irretrievably undone. Whether his tongue falter or his feet fail him or not, he will die of intemperance. By whatever name his disease may be called, it will be one of the legion which lie in wait above the path of intemperance, and which abused Heaven employs to execute wrath upon the guilty.

But of all the ways to hell, which the feet of deluded mortals tread, that of the intemperate is the most dreary and terrific. The demand for artificial stimulus to supply the deficiencies of healthful aliment, is like the rage of thirst, and the ravenous demand of famine. It is famine; for the artificial excitement has become as essential now to strength and cheerfulness, as simple nutrition once was.—But nature, taught by habit to require what once she did not need, demands gratification now with a decision inexorable as death, and to most men as irresistible. The denial is a living death. The stomach, the head, the heart, and arteries, and veins, and every muscle, and every nerve, feel the exhaustion, and the restless, unutterable wretchedness which puts out the light of life, and curtains the heavens, and carpets the earth with sackcloth.—All these varieties of sinking nature, call upon the wretched man with trumpet-tongue, to dispel this darkness, and raise the ebbing tide of life, by the application of the cause which produced these woes, and after a momentary alleviation, will produce them again with deeper terrors, and more urgent importunity; for the repetition, at each time renders the darkness deeper, and the torments of self-denial more irresistible and intolerable.

At length, the excitability of nature, flags, and stimulants of higher power, and in greater quantities, are required to rouse the impaired energies of life, until at length the whole process of dilatory murder, and worse than purgatorial sufferings, having been passed over, the silver cord is loosed, the golden bowl is broken, the wheel at the cistern stops, and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit to God who gave it.

These sufferings, however, of animal nature, are not to be compared with the moral agonies which convulse the soul. It is an immortal being, who sins, and suffers; and as his earthly house dissolves, he is approaching the judgment seat, in anticipation of a miserable eternity. He feels his captivity, and anguish of spirit, clanks his chains and cries for help. Conscience thunders, remorse goads, and as the gulph opens before him, he recoils, and trembles, and weeps, and prays, and resolves, and promises, and reforms, and "seeks it yet again."—again resolves, and weeps, and prays, and "seeks it yet again!" Wretched man, he has placed himself in the hands of a giant, who never pities, and never relaxes his iron gripe. He may struggle, but he is in chains. He may cry for release, but it comes not; and lost! lost! may be inscribed upon the door-posts of his dwelling.

In the mean time these paroxysms of his dying moral nature decline, and a fearful apathy, the harbinger of spiritual death, comes on. His resolution fails, and his mental energy, and his vigorous enterprise; and nervous irritation and depression ensue. The social affections lose their fullness and tenderness, and conscience loses its power, and the heart its sensibility, until all that was once lovely and of good report, retires and leaves the wretch abandoned to the appetites of a ruined animal. In this deplorable condition, reputation expires, business falters and becomes perplexed, and temptations to drink multiply as inclination to do so increases, and the power of resistance declines. And now the vortex roars, and the struggling victim buffets the fiery waves with feeble stroke, and warning supplication, until despair flashes upon his soul, and with an outcry that pierces the heavens, he ceases to strive, and disappears.

A sin so terrific should be detected in its origin, and strangled in the cradle; but ordinarily instead of this, the habit is fixed, and the hope of reformation is gone, before the subject has the least suspicion of danger. It is of vast importance therefore, that the various occasions of intemperance should be clearly described, that those whose condition is not irretrievable, may perceive their danger, and escape; and that all who are free, may be warned off from these places of temptation and ruin. For the benefit of the young, especially, I propose to lay down a map of the way to destruction, and to rear a monument of warning upon every spot where a way-faring man has been ensnared, and destroyed.

(To be Continued.)

General Articles.

ITALIAN THEATRE.

From the Courier des Tribunaux, of June 26.

OTELLO.—Triumph of Mad. Mallibran Garcia.

Admirable! sublime!—Such were the exclamations repeated yesterday, by the echoes of the Salle Favart. The sound of these applauses reverberates still. What a delightful evening! what enthusiasm! what a charming delirium! Never, perhaps, did the Italian Theatre achieve so brilliant a triumph—never was the laurel better merited! For some time crowds had pressed to the doors of the Theatre, when the bills announced OTELLO. Renown had spread from afar the admirable talent of Mad. Mallibran's Desdemona, and since that personation has been witnessed, it is impossible to conceive any thing more perfect. Madame Mallibran had before displayed all the treasures of her genius; it was still reserved for her to awaken and charm us by inspirations at the same time new and more ravishing than those which had already merited our applause. Never did she develop so much of truth and energy in her acting—so much grace, so much spirit, so much power, in her singing, as yesterday evening. That evening will long live in the memory of the happy spectators of her performance—long will the remembrance possess their minds, when other artists shall appear in the rôle which Madame Mallibran has forever appropriated to herself. How shall we give an account of that admi-

ble representation! A recital, however true it may be, must be cold to reality.

The Bill having announced the last representation of Mad. Mallibran, a prodigious crowd collected on the occasion. As soon as Desdemona appeared, numerous salvos of applause expressed the admiration which reigned among the spectators, and also the regrets which they experienced at the prospect of being so soon deprived of the most refined enjoyment which they had tasted since the departure of Mad. Pasta. From this moment to the end of the piece, Mad. Mallibran rose above herself. At parting, at the close of the second act, the illusion was complete. It was not merely an artist, repeating upon the stage, the improvisations of the boudoir. It was Desdemona herself, tender, passionate, burning with love,—such in fine as she was created by the powerful imagination of Shakespeare. How beautiful did she appear at the feet of her father, imploring his pardon, seeking shelter under his mantle, and raising with timidity her eyes bathed in tears! What sublime accents were those which her voice uttered, as if struggling with difficulty from her agonized heart! Never was filial piety expressed with such touching simplicity. Never was the imitation of nature carried further. At the moment when Desdemona, repulsed by her father, fell senseless, a crown was thrown from the boxes, and fell at the feet of the celebrated artist, in the midst of general and enthusiastic applause.

In the third act, on the rising of the curtain, Desdemona was discovered sitting, absorbed by her melancholy, holding the crown pressed to her bosom. The applause again became deafening. At last, after five minutes, she was able to make herself heard. The most splendid eulogium that can be bestowed upon this part of her performance, is, that for nearly half an hour, she drew continued tears from the eyes of her numerous admirers. All at once the attention was more strongly excited; tears ceased to flow—the heart, as if suspended, awaited with anxiety the close of that horrible scene which terminated the life of Desdemona. Calumniated by a traitor, she in vain sought her justification;—the arm was raised to strike her—she fled—pursued, she threw herself on her knees before her husband. She rose again, and again endeavoured to fly. Otello then seized her. In that moment, overcome by terror, perhaps influenced also by a remaining sentiment of love, she threw herself into the arms of her husband—she hung round his neck—and it was in that situation that she received her death. All was inspiration at that moment; and the pathetic was carried to its highest pitch. At that solemn period, there was no more applause. The audience were no longer witnessing a fictitious spectacle; they were spectators of a real catastrophe. Silence alone could convey an idea of such an emotion. No other means could express the profound sensation of the moment.

The curtain fell in the midst of silence, so eloquent. But at length the charm was broken; and deafening applause succeeded to that solemn stillness. The admiration of Mad. Mallibran was boundless. The spectacle had terminated; but the spectators remained immovable. It seemed as if they could not tear themselves from a spot where they had tasted so much enjoyment. At first a single cry was heard for the appearance of Madame Mallibran. The call became immediately universal. Enthusiasm like this is rare in harmony with the regulations of the police*—and it was hoped that the ordinance, rendered by a vexatious administration, always irritated by the glory of others, would not be enforced.

The curtain rose. An actor appeared. What he intended to say, was well known; and the audience would not hear him. Twice the curtain rose and fell; and twice the same actor came and disappeared without being able to obtain a hearing. All resistance, at length, was found to be absurd and useless.

Madame Mallibran appeared at last! Renewed acclamations resounded from all sides. The boxes were again crowded with spectators—the gay costumes of beauty still embellished the theatre. No one would depart without having played a part in crowing the delightful actress with her well-earned triumph. Crowns were showered from all sides—and in default of crowns, the ladies threw their bouquets upon the stage. Madame Mallibran stood in the midst of a rain of blossoms. Her emotions were profound. She saluted her audience; and wishing to reply more impressively to the enthusiasm of the spectators, a parting kiss, which she sent from her lips, terminated this brilliant ovation.

A representation for the benefit of Madame Mallibran is announced. No one will be absent. In the meanwhile our voice from the public expresses a wish, that the management, who seem so desirous to please their patrons, will retain the choicest flowers in her crown.

Speaking of Madame Mallibran's benefit, the same journal says:

The bills announced an act of the Barber of Seville, and the two last acts of Otello. It must be delightful to see in the same evening the same actress in two rôles, entirely opposite. Madame Mallibran plays Rosina in great spirit, perhaps with too much spirit; for instantaneously she will be obliged to quit her light-heartedness, her gaiety, her archness to represent a character comprising all that is most tender, most pathetic, and most sublime. How many happy hearts will she not make—but also, how many sad ones.—The Theatre of Saint Charles at Naples, would not contain the crowd, and yet the little Salle Favart is to witness the second triumph of Madame Mallibran!

* It appears that the police of the Italian Theatre, prohibits the appearance of a performer at the call of the audience.

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