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Contributors

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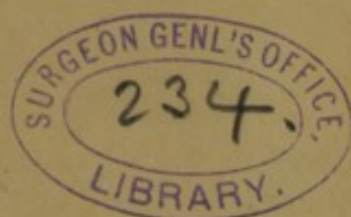
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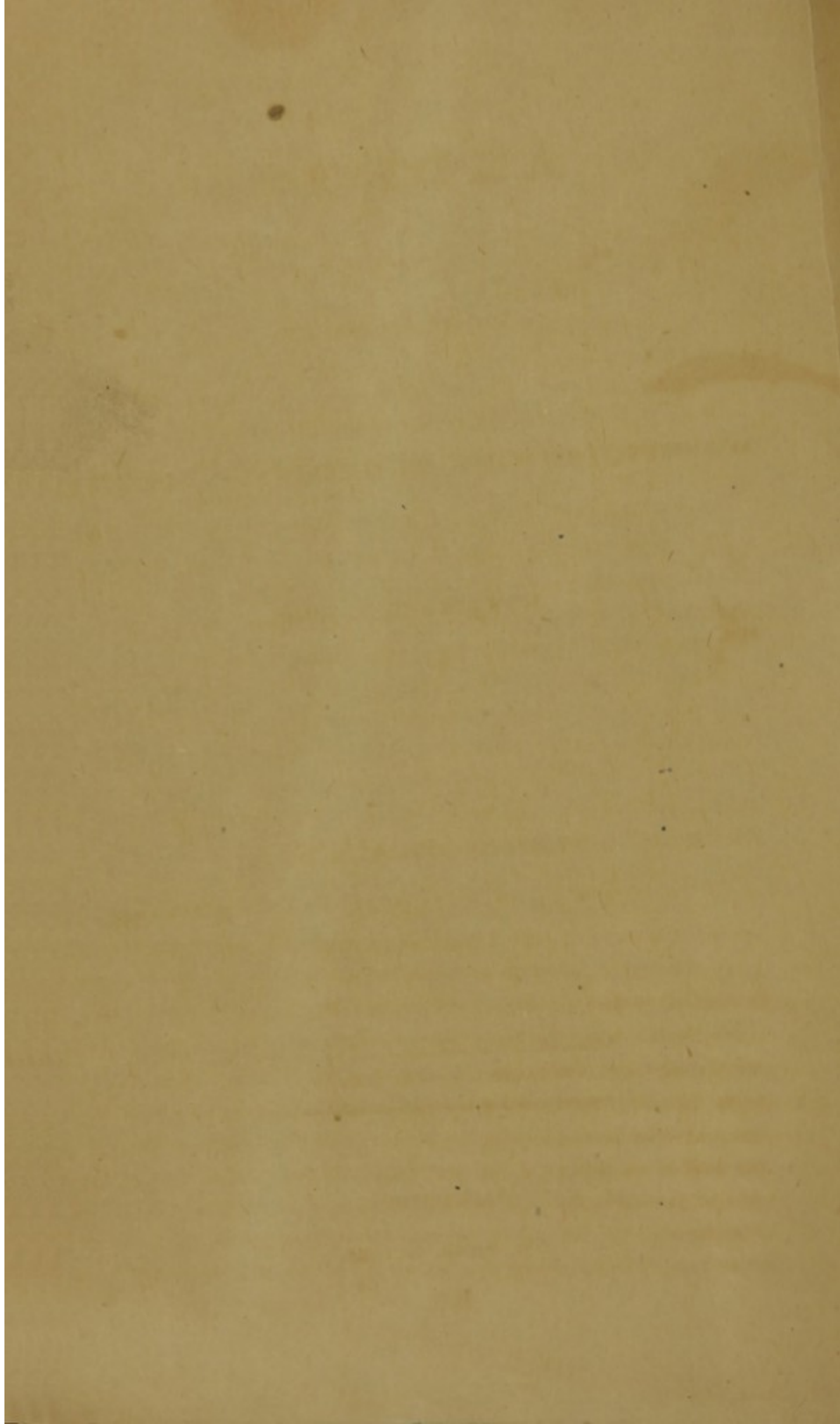
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Washington City Temperance Soc,

Nov. 15 / 1830.





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ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

WASHINGTON CITY TEMPERANCE SOCIETY,

NOVEMBER 15, 1830.



BY

THOMAS SEWALL, M. D.

Professor of Anatomy and Physiology in the Columbian College;

District of Columbia.

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ADDRESS.



FELLOW CITIZENS,

Every period in the history of the world has its peculiar features, is distinguished by some leading circumstances which seem to absorb the spirit of the historian, and mainly to arrest the attention of the enquirer after truth.

The progress of the arts and sciences, the discovery of new countries, the planting of colonies, the revolution of states and empires, the convulsions of kingdoms, the scisms and persecutions of the church, the tyranny of potentates over their subjects, as well as war, pestilence and famine, have all, in their turn, formed these great landmarks.

In view of these facts, it is natural for the enquiring mind, while careering over the world, and marking the events of the time, to stop and ask, what will constitute in future history, the great features of the period in which we live? Will the political revolutions of the times, the coronation and death of emperors and kings, or the contests of ambitious politicians, which now create such general commotion in the world, will these form the prominent features? They will no doubt be gathered up and form a part of the future history of our time; but, there are other circumstances and events which will constitute the more prominent subjects of attention; projects more noble and elevated, achievements more beneficent to man, and more extended and durable in their consequences.

The translation of the Holy Scriptures into every tongue, and their distribution through the world, the mission of the preached gospel to all nations, the efforts to wrest the rising generation from ignorance and vice, the exertions to emancipate the African from slavery and restore him to the land of his fathers, and to send back with him to that benighted region of the earth, the light of science and religion; to carry "light and immortality" to the idolatrous millions of Asia, and of the South Sea islands, as well as to bring to a knowledge of the truth the savage tribes

of our own continent. In short, the struggle of all Christendom to enlighten the ignorant, reclaim the vicious, civilize the heathen, and evangelize those who know not the way of salvation.

These are the circumstances which will be drawn from the records of our time ; and while they will stand out in bold relief among those events, upon the page of future history, they will descend with increasing lustre in all future time. The origin too of these enterprizes, which shall have led to such mighty consequences, will be sought for, and the names of those who led the way will be embalmed and eulogized, while the memory of the tyrant, the warrior, and the politician will be forgotten.

These reflections have been suggested by the occasion which has called us together this evening ; for by whatever name this society is recognized, and whatever part it may take in the great enterprize of ameliorating the condition of man, whether it be classed with the Bible and Missionary establishments, the education and tract associations, the institution of Infant and Sunday schools, or the colonization and temperance cause, the ultimate end is one and the same. They are all so many streams issuing from the same fountain ; and while they traverse and fertilize different regions, they pour their contents into the same ocean, an ocean whose waters are accumulating, whose boundaries are enlarging, and whose waves are rolling onward and onward, beating down the barriers which now narrow its limits.

It is with such views as these that we are enabled to come together on the present occasion, and to unite one with another, that every good member of society, every philanthropic individual, of whatever religious sect or profession, is enabled to come, and in despite of party zeal or sectarian bigotry, give his hand and his heart to the cause, the noble cause, in which we are engaged.

We are convened, my fellow citizens, to attend the first anniversary of a Society for the promotion of Temperance ; an institution, which in accordance with the spirit of the times, has been established through our land by the almost united voice of the nation, and this for the suppression of one of the most alarming evils that ever infested human society ; a vice too, so odious in its nature, so injurious in its consequences, and attended with so many circumstances of suffering, mortification and disgrace, that it seems difficult to understand how it should ever have become a prevalent evil among mankind ; and more especially, how it should have come down

to us from the early periods of society, gaining strength and power, and influence, in its descent. That such is the fact requires no proof. Its devastating effects are but too obvious. In these latter times more especially, it has swept over our land with the rapidity and power of a tempest, bearing down every thing in its course. Not content with rioting in the haunts of ignorance and vice, it has passed through our consecrated groves, has entered our most sacred enclosures:—And oh ! how many men of genius and of letters have fallen before it ! how many lofty intellects have been shattered and laid in ruins by its power ! how many a warm and philanthropic heart has been chilled by its icy touch ! It has left no retreat unvisited ; it has alike invaded our public and private assemblies, our political and social circles, our courts of justice and halls of legislation. It has stalked within the very walls of our Capitol, and there left the stain of its polluting touch on our national glory. It has leaped over the pale of the church, and even reached up its sacrilegious arm to the pulpit and dragged down some of its richest ornaments. It has revelled equally on the spoils of the palace and the cottage, and has seized its victims with an unsparing grasp, from every class of society ; the private citizen and public functionary, the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the enlightened and the ignorant,—and where is there a family among us so happy, as not to have wept over some of its members, who have fallen by the hand of this ruthless destroyer.

As a nation, intemperance has corrupted our morals, impaired our intellect, and enfeebled our physical strength. Indeed, in whatever light we view it, whether as an individual, a social, or national evil, as affecting our personal independence and happiness, our national wealth and industry ; as reducing our power of naval and military defence, as enfeebling the intellectual energies of the nation, and undermining the health of our fellow citizens ; as sinking the patriotism and valour of the nation, as increasing paupers, poverty and taxation, as sapping the foundation of our moral and religious institutions, or as introducing disorder, distress and ruin into families and society ; it calls to us in a voice of thunder, to awake from our slumbers, to seize every weapon, and wield every power which God and nature has placed within our reach, to protect ourselves and our fellow citizens from its ravages.

But the occasion will not permit me to dwell on the general effects of intemperance, nor to trace the history of its causes.—I shall, therefore,

confine myself more particularly to a consideration of its influence on the individual—its effects on the moral, intellectual and physical constitution of man—not the primary effect of ardent spirit as displayed in a fit of intoxication : scenes of this description have too frequently been impressed on your senses, to render it proper or necessary that I should at this time introduce a subject so disgusting, and attended with so many painful recollections. It is the more insidious, permanent and fatal effects of intemperance, as exemplified in the case of the habitual dram-drinker, to which I wish to call your attention.

I. The effects of ardent spirit on the moral powers :

It is perhaps difficult to determine in what way intemperance first manifests its influence on the moral powers, so variously does it affect different individuals. Were I to speak from my own observation, I should say that it first appears in an alienation of those kind and tender sympathies which bind a man to his family and friends ; those lively sensibilities which enable him to participate in the joys and sorrows of those around him. “ The social affections lose their fulness, and tenderness, the conscience its power, the heart its sensibility, till all that was once lovely and rendered him the joy and the idol of his friends, retires,” and leaves him to the dominion of the appetites and passions of the brute. “ Religious enjoyment, if he ever possessed any, declines as the emotions excited by ardent spirit, arise.” He loses by degrees his regard to truth and to the fulfilment of his engagements—he forgets the Sabbath and the house of worship, and lounges upon his bed, or lingers at the tavern. He lays aside his bible—his family devotion is not heard, and his closet no longer listens to the silent whispers of prayer. He at length becomes irritable, peevish and profane ; and is finally lost to every thing that respects decorum in appearance, or virtue in principle ; and it is lamentable to mark the steps of that process by which the virtuous and elevated man sinks to ruin.

II. Its effects on the intellectual powers :

Here the influence of intemperance is marked and decisive. The inebriate first loses his vivacity and natural acuteness of perception. His judgment becomes clouded and impaired in its strength, the memory also enfeebled and sometimes quite obliterated. The mind is wandering and vacant, and incapable of intense or steady application to any one subject. This state is usually accompanied by an unmeaning stare or fixedness of countenance quite peculiar to the drunkard. The imagina-

tion and the will, if not enfeebled, acquire a morbid sensibility, from which they are thrown into a state of violent excitement from the slightest causes; hence the inebriate sheds floods of tears over the pictures of his own fancy. I have often seen him, and especially on his recovery from a fit of intoxication, weep and laugh alternately over the same scene. The will, too, acquires an omnipotent ascendancy over him, and is the only monitor to which he yields obedience. The appeals of conscience, the claims of domestic happiness, of wives and children, of patriotism and of virtue, are not heard.

The different powers of the mind having thus lost their natural relation to each other, the healthy balance being destroyed, the intellect is no longer fit for intense application, or successful effort—and although the inebriate may, and sometimes does astonish, and delight by the flights of his fancy, and the poignancy of his wit, yet in nine cases out of ten he fails, and there is never any confidence to be reposed in him. There have been a few, who from peculiarity of constitution, or some other cause, have continued to perform intellectual labour for many years, while slaves to ardent spirits; but in no instance has the vigor of the intellect or its ability to labour been increased by indulgence: and where there is one who has been able to struggle on under the habits of intemperance, there are thousands who have perished in the experiment, and some among the most powerful minds that the world ever produced. On the other hand, we shall find by looking over the biography of the great men of every age, that those who have possessed the clearest and most powerful minds, neither drank spirits nor indulged in the pleasures of the table. Sir Isaac Newton, John Locke, Dr. Franklin, John Wesley, Sir William Jones, John Fletcher, and President Edwards, furnish a striking illustration of this truth. One of the secrets by which these men produced such astonishing results, were enabled to perform so much intellectual labour, and of so high a grade, and to arrive at old age in the enjoyment of health, was a rigid course of abstinence. But I hasten to consider more particularly,

III. Its effects on the physical powers:

In view of this part of the subject, the attention of the critical observer is arrested by a series of circumstances, alike disgusting and melancholy.

1. The odour of the breath of the drunkard furnishes the earliest indication by which the habitual use of ardent spirit becomes known. This

is occasioned by the exhalation of the alcoholic principle from the bronchial vessels, and air cells of the lungs—not of pure spirit, as taken into the stomach, but of spirit which has been absorbed, has mingled with the blood, and has been subjected to the action of the different organs of the body ; and not containing any principle which contributes to the nourishment or renovation of the system, is cast out with the other excretions as poisonous and hurtful ; and this peculiar odour does not arise from the accidental or occasional use of spirit ; it marks only the habitual dram-drinker ; the one who indulges daily in his potation ; and although its density varies in some degree with the kind of spirit consumed, the habits and constitution of the individual, yet it bears generally a close relation to the degree of intemperance. These observations are confirmed by some experiments made on living animals by the celebrated French Physiologist, Magendie. He ascertained that diluted alcohol, a solution of camphor, and some other odorous substances, when subjected to the absorbing power of the veins, are taken up by them, and after mingling with the blood, pass off by the pulmonary exhalants. Even phosphorus injected into the crural vein of a dog, he found to pass off in a few moments from the nostrils of the animal in a dense white vapour, which he ascertained to be phosphoric acid. Cases have occurred, in which the breath of the drunkard has become so highly charged with alcohol, as to render it actually inflammable by the touch of a taper. One individual in particular, is mentioned, who often amused his comrades by passing his breath through a small tube, and setting it on fire, as it issued from it. It appears also, that this has sometimes been the source of that combustion of the body of the drunkard, which has been denominated spontaneous ; many well authenticated cases of which are on record.

2. The perspirable matter which passes off from the skin becomes charged with the odour of alcohol in the drunkard, and is so far changed in some cases as to furnish evidence of the kind of spirit drank. I have met with two instances, says Dr. McNish, the one in a claret, and the other in a port drinker ; in which the moisture that exhaled from their bodies, had a ruddy complexion, similar to the wine on which they had committed their debauch.

3. The whole system soon bears marks of debility and decay. The voluntary muscles lose their power, and cease to act under the controul of the will, and hence all the movements become awkward, exhibiting

the appearance of stiffness in the joints. The positions of the body, also, are tottering and infirm, and the step loses its elasticity and vigor. The muscles, and especially those of the face and lips, are often affected with a convulsive twitching, which produces the involuntary winking of the eye, and quivering of the lip, so characteristic of the intemperate. Indeed, all the motions seem unnatural and forced, as if restrained by some power within. The extremities are at length seized with a tremor, which is more strongly marked after recovery from a fit of intoxication. The lips lose their significant expression, and become sensual—the complexion assumes a sickly leaden hue, or is changed to an unhealthy, fiery redness, and is covered with red streaks and blotches. The eye becomes watery, tender, and inflamed, and loses its intelligence and its fire. These symptoms, together with a certain cedematous appearance about the eye, bloating of the whole body, with a dry, feverish skin, seldom fail to mark the habitual dram-drinker; and they go on increasing and increasing, till the intelligence and dignity of the man is lost in the tameness and sensuality of the brute.

But these effects, which are external and obvious, are only the “signals which nature holds out, and waves in token of internal distress;” for all the time the inebriate has been pouring down his daily draught and making merry over the cup, morbid changes have been going on within; and though these are unseen, and it may be unsuspected, they are fatal, irretrievable.

A few of the most important of these changes I shall now describe :

4. The stomach and its functions:—

This is the great organ of digestion. It is the chief instrument by which food is prepared to nourish, sustain and renovate the different tissues of the body, to carry on the various functions, and to supply the waste which continually takes place in the system. It is not strange, therefore, that the habitual application to the organ of any agent, calculated to derange its functions, or change its organization, should be followed by symptoms so various and extensive, and by consequences so fatal. The use of ardent spirit produces both these effects; it deranges the functions of the stomach, and if persisted in long enough, seldom fails to change its organic structure.

The inebriate first loses his appetite, and becomes thirsty and feverish; he vomits in the morning, and is affected with spasmodic pains in

the region of the stomach. He is often seized with permanent dyspepsia, and either wastes away by degrees, or dies suddenly of a fit of cramp in the stomach.

On examining the stomach after death, it is generally found irritated, and approaching a state of inflammation, with its vessels enlarged, and filled with black blood; and particularly those of the mucous coat, which gives to the internal surface of the stomach the appearance of purple or reddish streaks, resembling the livid patches seen on the face of the drunkard.

The coats of the stomach become greatly thickened and corrugated, and so firmly united as to form one inseparable mass. In this state, the walls of the organ are sometimes increased in thickness, to the extent of ten or twelve lines, and are sometimes found also in a scirrhus, or cancerous condition.

The following case occurred in my practice several years since: A middle aged gentleman, of wealth and standing, had long been accustomed to mingle in the convivial circle, and though by no means a drunkard, had indulged at times in the use of his old cogniac, with an unsparing hand. He was at length seized with pain in the region of the stomach, and a vomiting of his food an hour or two after eating. In about eighteen months he died in a state of extreme emaciation.

On opening the body after death, the walls of the whole of the right extremity of the stomach were found in a scirrhus and cancerous condition, and thickened to the extent of about two inches. The cavity of the organ was so far obliterated as scarcely to admit the passage of a probe from the left to the right extremity, and the opening which remained was so unequal and irregular as to render it evident that but little of the nourishment he had received could have passed the lower orifice of the stomach for many months.

I have never dissected the stomach of a drunkard, in which the organ did not manifest some remarkable deviation from its healthy condition. But the derangement of the stomach is not limited to the function of nutrition merely. This organ is closely united to every other organ, and to each individual tissue of the body, by its sympathetic relations. When the stomach, therefore, becomes diseased, other parts suffer with it. The functions of the brain, the heart, the lungs, and the liver become disordered, the secretions are altered, and all the operations of the animal economy are more or less affected.

5. The liver and its functions :

Alcohol, in every form and proportion, has long been known to exert a strong and speedy influence on this organ, when used internally. Aware of this fact, the poultry dealers of England, are in the habit of mixing a quantity of spirit with the food of their fowls, in order to increase the size of the liver; so that they may be enabled to supply to the epicure a greater abundance of that part of the animal, which he regards as the most delicious.

The influence of spirit on the liver is exerted in two ways : First, the impression made upon the mucous coat of the stomach, is extended to the liver by sympathy : the second mode of action is through the medium of the circulation, and by the immediate action of the alcoholic principle on the liver itself, as it passes through the organ, mingled with the blood. In whichever of these way sit operates, its first effect is to increase the action of the liver, and sometimes to such a degree as to produce inflammation. Its secretion becomes changed from a bright yellow to a green or black, and from a thin fluid to a substance resembling tar in its consistence. There soon follows also an enlargement of the liver and a change in its organic structure. I have met with several cases in which the liver has become enlarged from intemperance, so as to occupy a greater part of the cavity of the abdomen, and weighing from eight to twelve pounds, when it should have weighed not more than four or five.

The liver sometimes, however, even when it manifests great morbid change in its organic structure, is rather diminished than increased in its volume. This was the case in the person of the celebrated stage actor, George Frederick Cook, who died a few years since in the city of New York. This extraordinary man was long distinguished for the profligacy of his life, as well as for the native vigour of his mind and body. At the time of his death the body was opened by Dr. Hosack, who found that the liver did not exceed its usual dimensions, but was astonishingly hard, of a lighter colour than natural, and that its texture was so dense as to make considerable resistance to the knife. The blood vessels, which in a healthy condition are extremely numerous and large, were in this case nearly obliterated, evincing that the regular circulation through the liver, had long since ceased ; and tubercles were found throughout the whole substance of the organ.

This case presents a correct idea of the state of the liver, in a majority of those who survive the first shock which the system receives from intemperance, and where the disease which it produces assumes a chronic form. I have met with several cases in the course of my dissections, in which the liver was found smaller than natural, shrivelled, indurated, its blood vessels diminished in size and number, with the whole of its internal structure more or less changed. In consequence of these morbid changes in the liver, other organs become affected, as the spleen, the pancreas, &c. either by sympathy or in consequence of their dependence on the healthy functions of the liver for the due performance of their own.

6. Of the Brain and its functions :

Inflammation and engorgement of this organ are frequent consequences of intemperance, and may take place during a debauch—or may arise some time after, during the stage of debility, from a loss of the healthy balance of action between the different parts of the system. This inflammation is sometimes acute, is marked by furious delirium, and terminates fatally in the course of a few days, and sometimes a few hours. At other times it assumes a chronic form, continues much longer; and then frequently results in an effusion of serum, or an extravasation of blood, and the patient dies in a state of insensibility, with all the symptoms of compressed brain. Sometimes the system becomes so saturated with ardent spirit, that there is good reason to believe, the effusions which take place in the cavities of the brain, and elsewhere, are composed in part at least, of the alcoholic principle. The following case occurred, not long since, in England, and is attested by unquestionable authority.

A man was taken up dead in the streets of London, soon after having drank a quart of gin, on a wager. He was carried to the Westminster Hospital, and there dissected. “In the ventricles of the brain was found a considerable quantity of limpid fluid, distinctly impregnated with gin, both to the sense of smell and taste, and even to the test of inflammability. The liquid appeared to the senses of the examining students, as strong as one-third gin, and two-thirds water.”

Dr. Armstrong, who has enjoyed very ample opportunity of investigating this subject, speaks of the chronic inflammation of the brain and its membranes, as frequently proceeding from the free use of strong liquors.

It is a fact familiar to every anatomist, that alcohol, even when greatly diluted, has, by its action on the brain after death, the effect of harden-

ing it, as well as most of the tissues of the body which contain albumen, and it is common to immerse the brain in ardent spirit for a few days, in order to render it the firmer for dissection.

On examining the brain after death, of such as have long been accustomed to the free use of ardent spirit, it is said the organ is generally found harder than in temperate persons. It has no longer that delicate and elastic texture. Its arteries become diminished in size, and lose their transparency, while the veins and sinuses are greatly distended and irregularly enlarged.

This statement is confirmed by my own dissections, and they seem also to be in full accordance with all the intellectual and physical phenomena displayed in the drunkard, while living.

7. The heart and its functions :

It has generally been supposed, that the heart is less frequently affected by intemperance, than most of the other great vital organs ; but, from the history of the cases which have come under my own observation, I am convinced that it seldom escapes disease under the habitual use of ardent spirit. And why should it, since it is thrown almost perpetually into a state of unnatural exertion, the very effect produced by the violent agitation of the passions, the influence of which upon this organ is found so injurious.

The following case came under my notice, a few winters since.—A large athletic man, long accustomed to the use of ardent spirit, on drinking a glass of raw whiskey, dropped instantly dead. On carefully dissecting the body, no adequate cause of the sudden cessation of life could be found in any part, except the heart. This organ was free from blood, was hard and firmly contracted, as if affected by spasm. I am convinced that many of those cases of sudden death which take place with intemperate persons is the result of a spasmodic action of the heart, from sympathy with the stomach, or some other part of the system. The use of ardent spirit, no doubt, promotes also the ossification of the valves of the heart, as well as the developement of other organic affections.

8. The lungs and their functions :

Respiration in the inebriate is generally oppressed and laborious, and especially after eating, or violent exercise ; and he is teased with a cough, attended with copious expectoration, and especially after his recovery from a fit of intoxication ; and these symptoms go on increasing, and unless arrested in their progress, terminate in consumption.

This affection of the lungs is produced in two ways : first, by the immediate action of the alcoholic principle upon the highly sensible membrane which lines the trachea, bronchial vessels, and air cells of the lungs as poured out by the exhalants : and second, by the sympathy which is called into action between the lungs and other organs, already in a state of disease, and more especially, that of the stomach and liver.

I have met with many cases in the course of my practice, of cough and difficult breathing, which could be relieved only by regulating the functions of the stomach, and which soon yielded, on the patient ceasing to irritate this organ with ardent spirit. I have found the liver still more frequently the source of this affection, and on restoring the organ to its healthy condition, by laying aside the use of ardent spirits, all the pulmonary symptoms have subsided.

On examining the lungs of the drunkard after death, they are frequently found adhering to the walls of the chest ; hepatized, or affected with tubercles.

But time would fail me, were I to attempt an account of half the pathology of drunkenness. *Dyspepsia, Jaundice, Emaciation, Corpulence, Dropsy, Ulcers, Rheumatism, Gout, Tremors, Palpitation, Hysteria, Epilepsy, Palsy, Lethargy, Apoplexy, Melancholy, Madness, Delirium-tremens, and Premature old age*, compose but a small part of the catalogue of diseases produced by ardent spirit. Indeed, there is scarcely a morbid affection to which the human body is liable, that has not, in one way or another, been produced by it ; there is not a disease but it has aggravated, nor a predisposition to disease, which it has not called into action ; and although its effects are in some degree modified by age and temperament, by habit and occupation, by climate and season of the year, and even by the intoxicating agent itself ; yet, the general and ultimate consequences are the same.

But I pass on to notice one state of the system, produced by ardent spirit, too important and interesting to leave unexamined. It is that predisposition to disease and death which so strongly characterizes the drunkard in every situation of life.

It is unquestionably true, that many of the surrounding objects in nature, are constantly tending to man's destruction. The excess of heat and cold, humidity and dryness, the vicissitudes of the season, noxious exhalations from the earth, the floating atoms in the atmosphere, the

poisonous vapours from decomposed animal and vegetable matter, with many other invisible agents, are exerting their deadly influence; and were it not that every part of his system is endowed with a self-preserving power, a principle of excitability, or in other words, a vital principle, the operations of the economy would cease, and a dissolution of his organic structure take place. But this principle being implanted in the system, re-action takes place, and thereby a vigorous contest is maintained with the warring elements without, as well as with the principle of decay within.

It is thus that man is enabled to endure from year to year, the toils and fatigues of life, the variation of heat and cold, and the vicissitudes of the season—that he is enabled to traverse every region of the globe, and to live with almost equal ease under the equator, and in the frozen regions of the north. It is by this power that all his functions are performed, from the commencement to the close of life.

The principle of excitability exists in the highest degree in the infant, and diminishes at every succeeding period of life; and if man is not cut down by disease or violence, he struggles on, and finally dies a natural death; a death occasioned by the exhaustion of the principle of excitability.

It is also true, that artificial stimulus in whatever way applied, tends constantly to exhaust the principle of excitability of the system, and this in proportion to its intensity, and the freedom with which it is applied.

But there is still another principle on which the use of ardent spirit predisposes the drunkard to disease and death. It acts on the blood, impairs its vitality, deprives it of its red colour, and thereby renders it unfit to stimulate the heart, and other organs through which it circulates; unfit also, to supply the materials for the different secretions, and to renovate the different tissues of the body, as well as to sustain the energy of the brain; offices which it can perform only, while it retains its vermilion colour, and other arterial properties. The blood of the drunkard is several shades darker in its colour, than that of temperate persons, and also coagulates less readily and firmly, and is loaded with serum; appearances which indicate that it has exchanged its arterial properties for those of the venous blood. This is the cause of the livid complexion of the inebriate, which so strongly marks him in the advanced stage of intemperance. Hence, too, all the functions of his body

are sluggish, irregular, and the whole system loses its tone and its energy. If ardent spirit, when taken into the system, exhausts the vital principle of the solids, it destroys the vital principle of the blood also ; and if taken in large quantities, produces sudden death ; in which case the blood, as in death produced by lightning, by opium, or by violent and long continued exertion, does not coagulate.

The principles laid down are plain, and of easy application to the case before us.

The inebriate, having by the habitual use of ardent spirit, exhausted to a greater or less extent, the principle of excitability in the solids, the power of reaction; and the blood having become incapable of performing its office also, he is alike predisposed to every disease, and rendered liable to the inroads of every invading foe. So far, therefore, from protecting the system against disease, intemperance ever constitutes one of its strongest predisposing causes.

Superadded to this, whenever disease does lay its grasp upon the drunkard, the powers of life being already enfeebled by the stimulus of ardent spirit, he unexpectedly sinks in the contest, and but too frequently to the mortification of his physician, and the surprize and grief of his friends. Indeed, inebriation so enfeebles the powers of life, so modifies the character of disease, and so changes the operation of medical agents, that unless the young physician has studied thoroughly the constitution of the drunkard, he has but partially learned his profession, and is not fit for a practitioner of the present age.

These are the true reasons why the drunkard dies so easily, and from such slight causes.

A sudden cold, a pleurisy, a fever, a fractured limb, or a slight wound of the skin, is often more than his shattered powers can endure. Even a little excess of exertion, an exposure to heat or cold, a hearty repast or a glass of cold water, not unfrequently extinguishes the small remains of the vital principle.

In the season that has just closed upon us, we have had a melancholy exhibition of the effect of intemperance in the tragical death of some dozens of our fellow citizens ; and had the extreme heat which prevailed for several days, continued for as many weeks, we should hardly have had a confirmed drunkard left among us.

Many of those deaths which came under my notice seemed almost spontaneous, and some of them took place in less than one hour from

the first symptom of indisposition. Some died apparently from a slight excess of fatigue, some from a few hours exposure to the sun, and some from a small draught of cold water ; causes quite inadequate to the production of such effects in temperate persons.

Thus, fellow-citizens, I have endeavoured to delineate the effects of ardent spirit upon man, and more especially to portray its influence on his moral, intellectual, and physical powers. The sketch I have given is a brief one, but the occasion would not permit me to say more, and my feelings would not allow me to have said less.

But we are not assembled to brood over the evils of intemperance, and to spend our time in mourning the ravages it has made in our land, to weep over the broken-hearted fathers and mothers—the deserted wives and children—the suffering widows and orphans it has created. We are assembled, not merely to paint its horrors, and deplore its desolations ; we are convened to take counsel together, to learn the success of the society during the past year ; the progress the cause of temperance is making through the land, and to devise measures to promote its advancement ; and not to devise only : we are called upon to execute as well as design. There is a work to be performed, and we are pledged not to draw back from its hardships, nor shrink from its responsibilities ; and what can be done ? Permit me to suggest a few things which may be done, and which must be done—before the evils we deplore will be eradicated.

1. Let us keep in view the objects of this society. “ *To produce united, vigorous, and systematic exertions for the suppression of intemperance ; to diffuse information, and give circulation to publications which exhibit the evils of intemperance, and the best means of checking its progress.*”

Let us bear in mind also, the obligation imposed on us as members, “ *to use all proper measures to discourage the use of ardent spirit in the social circle, at public meetings, on the farm, in the mechanic shop, and in all other places.*”

These are the objects of the Society, and this the obligation resting upon its members. It is not a mere matter of formality that we have put our names to its constitution ; we have pledged ourselves to be bold, active, and persevering in the cause ; to proclaim the dangers of intemperance to our fellow citizens, and to do what we can to arrest its progress.

In view of these objects and of this pledge, then, let us, if indeed we have not already done it, banish ardent spirit from our houses at once, and forever, and then we can act with decision and energy, and speak in a tone of authority, and our voice will be heard, if precept be sanctioned by example.

2. Let us use our utmost endeavours to lessen the number, and if possible, utterly exterminate from among us those establishments which are the chief agents in propagating the evils of intemperance. I refer to those shops which are licensed for retailing ardent spirits. Here is the source of the evil. These are the agents that are sowing among us the seeds of vice, and poverty and wretchedness.

And what can be done effectually to arrest the progress of intemperance, so long as they are permitted to open their doors and hold out their alluring temptations to the unwary, and already half-poisoned of our fellow citizens?

How preposterous ! an enlightened community, professing the highest regard for morality and religion, making laws for the suppression and punishment of vice, and the promotion of virtue and good order, instituting societies to encourage industry, enlighten the ignorant, reclaim the vicious, bring back the wanderer, protect the orphan, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, bind up the broken hearted, and restore domestic peace :—at the same time to create and foster those very means that carry idleness and ignorance, and vice and nakedness, and starvation and discord into all ranks of society; that make widows and orphans, that sow the seeds of disease and death among us:—that strike, indeed, at the foundation of all that is good and great.

You create paupers, and lodge them in your almshouse ; orphans, and give them a residence in your asylum ; convicts, and send them to the penitentiary. You seduce men to crime, and then arraign them at the bar of justice—immure them in prison. With one hand you thrust the dagger to the heart, with the other attempt to assuage the pain it causes.

We all remember to have heard from the lips of our parents, the narration of the fact, that in the early history of our country, the tomahawk and scalping knife were put into the hands of our savage neighbours, by our enemies at war, and that a bounty was awarded for the depredations they committed on the lives of our defenceless fellow-

citizens. Our feelings were shocked at the recital, and a prejudice was created, as well to these poor wandering savages, as to the nation that prompted them to the work, which neither time nor education has eradicated. Yet, as merciless and savage as this practice may appear to us, it was christian, it was humane, compared with ours; theirs sought only the life blood, and that of their enemies; ours seeks the blood of souls, and that of our own citizens, and friends and neighbors. Their avarice was satiated with a few inches of the scalp, and the death inflicted was often a sudden and easy one; ours produces a death that lingers; and not content with the lives of our fellow-citizens, it rifles their pockets. It revels in rapine and robbery; it sacks whole towns and villages; it lays waste fields and vineyards; it riots on domestic peace, and virtue and happiness; it sets at variance the husband and the wife; it causes the parent to forsake the child, and the child to curse the parent; it tears asunder the strongest bonds of society; it severs the tenderest ties of nature.

And who is the author of all this—and where lies the responsibility? I appeal to my fellow-citizens!

Are not we the authors—does not the responsibility rest upon us—is it not so?

The power emanates from us; we delegate it to the constituted authorities; and we say to them go on, “cast fire-brands, arrows, and death;” and let the blood of those that perish “be on us and our children.” We put the tomahawk and scalping knife into the hands of our neighbours, and award to them a bounty. We do more—we share the plunder. For the paltry sum of twenty dollars, we consent that a floodgate of vice, and poverty and death, be opened upon our citizens; and by the multiplication of these through our city, we receive into our treasury the annual sum of about six thousand dollars. One half of this to be expended in the support of the paupers it creates, the other half in improving our streets, and in ornamenting our public squares! Let us arouse, my fellow citizens from our insensibility and redeem our character for consistency, humanity and benevolence.

3. Let us not confine our views, or limit our operations to the narrow boundaries of our own City or District. Intemperance is a common enemy. It exists every where, and every where is pursuing its victims to destruction; while therefore, we are actively engaged upon the subject in Washington, let us endeavor to do something elsewhere; and much may be

done by spreading through our country, correct information on the subject of intemperance. To this end, every newspaper and every press, should be put in requisition. Circulate through the various avenues, suitable tracts, essays, and other documents, setting forth the causes of intemperance, its evils, and its remedy; together with an account of the cheering progress now making to eradicate it.

Do this, and you will find thousands starting up in different parts of the country to lend their influence, and give their money in support of your cause; individuals who have hitherto been unconscious of the extent and magnitude of the evil of intemperance; you will find some who have been slumbering upon the very precipice of ruin, rallying round your standard. Indeed we have all been insensible, till the voice of alarm was sounded, and the facts were set in array before us.

4. Appeal to the medical profession of the country, and ask them to correct the false idea which so extensively, I may say so universally prevails, viz : That ardent spirit is some times necessary in the treatment of disease. This opinion has slain its thousands and its tens of thousands, and multitudes of dram-drinkers daily shelter themselves under its delusive mask. One takes a little to raise his desponding spirits, or to drown his sorrow; another to sharpen his appetite or relieve his dyspepsia; one to ease his gouty pains, another to supple his stiffened limbs or calm his quivering muscles. One drinks to overcome the heat, another to ward off the cold; and all this as a medicine. Appeal, then, to the medical profession, and they will tell you, every independent, honest, sober, intelligent member of it will tell you, that there is no case in which ardent spirit is indispensable, and for which there is not an adequate substitute. And it is time the profession should have an opportunity to exonerate itself from the charge, under which it has long rested, of *making drunkards*. But I entreat my professional brethren, not to be content with giving a mere assent to this truth. You hold a station in society, which gives you a commanding influence on this subject; and if you will but raise your voice and speak out boldly, you may exert an agency in this matter, which will bring down the blessings of unborn millions upon your memory.

5. Call upon the different christian denominations of the country to unite in introducing an article into their church polity, prohibiting the use, the commerce and manufacture of ardent spirit among the members of their communion. Let this be done, and there will be less occasion than we now have, to weep over apostate professors of religion.

It is disgraceful to any Church, that its members should be concerned in the distillation, sale, or use of this poisonous and demoralizing substance.

What should we say of a Christian, if such a thing could be, who should spend his life in writing and disseminating infidel books, or in propagating among his fellow-citizens, libertine sentiments? What should we think of him, who should spread the small pox or yellow fever among his neighbours, or sow the seeds of mania or consumption—and this for a small reward? Yet such an one would be far less criminal, would be far more consistent, than he who manufactures or vends ardent spirit.

Will not all our Churches of every denomination, unite upon this subject? The experiment has been made; our quaker brethren have set an example worthy the imitation of all. They have long prohibited both the traffic and consumption of ardent spirit in their society—and what is the consequence? They are distinguished over all the world for their sobriety, exemplary morals, and thrift in business. They have clearly proved also, that there is far less difficulty in maintaining a rigid discipline, in the entire exclusion of ardent spirit, than in enforcing a loose one in regulating the conduct of those who have already become intemperate.

6. Much may be done by guarding the rising generation from the contagion of intemperance.

It is especially with the children and youth of our land, that we may expect our efforts to be permanently useful. Only let them once contract a love for ardent spirit, and you may as well expect to turn the current of the Mississippi to the north, as to extinguish it. If you cannot stop them in the beginning, you cannot stop them at all. You cannot convert the drunkard into a sober man. The trial has been made a thousand times, and a thousand times has failed. It is a miracle if it be done at all, and must be effected by a stronger arm than that of man. It is true, you may render his situation and that of his family more tolerable, by forcibly withholding ardent spirit from him; but in this, you neither slake his thirst, nor eradicate his propensity. Only light up the convivial hall, and spread the temptation afresh before him, and his appetite revives, and he goes on with increased celerity to ruin.

Let us then guard with peculiar vigilance the youthful mind, and with all suitable measures, impress it with such sentiments of disgust and

horror of the vice of intemperance, as to cause it to shrink from its very approach. Carry the subject into our Infant and Sunday Schools, and call on the managers and teachers of those institutions, to aid you by the circulation of suitable tracts, and by such other instruction as may be deemed proper. Let the rising generation be protected but for a few years, and the present race of drunkards will have disappeared from among us, and there will be no new recruits to take their place.

7. Let intelligent and efficient agents be sent out into every portion of our country, to spread abroad information upon the subject of intemperance, to rouse up the people to a sense of their danger, and to form temperance societies; and let there be such a system of correspondence and co-operation established among these associations as will convey information to each, and impart energy and efficiency to the whole. "No great melioration of the human condition was ever achieved without the concurrent effort of numbers; and no extended and well directed association of moral influence was ever made in vain."* Much has already been done, but much still remains to be accomplished; and more especially in the middle, southern and western parts of our country.

8. Let all the members of the temperance societies, as well as others, who regard the virtue, the honor, and the patriotism of their country, withhold their suffrages from such candidates for office, as are concerned in the commerce or manufacture of ardent spirit; and above all, from such as offer it as a bribe to secure their elevation to power. It is derogatory to the liberties of our country, that office can be attained by such corruption—be held by such a tenure.

9. Let the Ministers of the Gospel, wherever called to labour, exert their influence, by precept and example, in promoting the cause of temperance;—many of them have already stepped forth, and with a noble boldness have proclaimed the alarm, and have led on in the work of reformation; but many timid spirits still linger, and others seem not deeply impressed with the importance of the subject, and with the responsibility of their station. Ye venerated men, you are not only called to stand forth as our moral beacons, and to be unto us burning and shining lights; but you are placed as watchmen upon our walls, to announce to us the approach of danger. It is mainly through your example and your labours, that religion and virtue are so extensively disseminated through our country—that this land is not now a moral waste. You have ever exerted an important influence in society, and have held a

* Beecher.

high place in the confidence and affections of the people. You are widely spread over the country, and the scene of your personal labours will furnish you with frequent opportunities to diffuse information upon the subject of temperance, and to advance its progress. Let me then admonish you to arouse to a sense of the dignity and responsibility of your office, and ask you, one and all, to grant us your active and hearty co-operation.

10. Appeal to the female sex of our country, and ask them to come to your assistance; and if they will consent to steel their hearts against the inebriate, to shut out from their society the man who visits the tippling shop, their influence will be omnipotent. And by what power ye mothers, and wives, and daughters, shall I invoke your aid? Shall I carry you to the house of the drunkard, and point you to his weeping and broken-hearted wife, his suffering and degraded children, robed in rags and poverty and vice? Shall I go with you to the almshouse, the orphan asylum, and to the retreat for the insane, that your sensibility may be roused? Shall I ask you to accompany me to the penitentiary and the prison house, that you may there behold the end of intemperance? Nay, shall I draw back the curtain and disclose to you the scene of the drunkard's death bed? No—I will not demand of you a task so painful:—rather let me remind you, that you are to become the mothers of our future heroes and statesmen, philosophers and divines, lawyers and physicians:—and shall they be enfeebled in body, debauched in morals, disordered in intellect, or healthy, pure, and full of mental energy? It is for you to decide this question. You have the future destiny of our beloved country in your hands. Let me entreat you then, for God's sake, and for your country's sake, not to ally yourselves to the drunkard, nor to put the cup to the mouth of your offspring, and thereby implant in them a craving for ardent spirit, which, once produced, is never eradicated:—rather “bring them to your family altar, and make them swear eternal hatred to ardent spirit.”

11. Call upon all public and private associations, religious, literary, and scientific, to banish ardent spirit from their circle;—call upon the agricultural, manufacturing, and commercial establishments, to withhold it from those engaged in their employment;—call upon the legislatures of the different states, to co-operate by the enactment of such laws as will discourage the vending of ardent spirit, and render licenses to sell it unattainable:—call upon the proper officers, to banish from

the army and navy that article, which of all others, is most calculated to enfeeble the physical energies, corrupt the morals, destroy the patriotism, and damp the courage of our soldiers and sailors;—call upon our national legislature, to impose such duties on the distillation and importation of ardent spirit as will ultimately exclude it from the list of articles of commerce, and eradicate it from our land.

Finally, call upon every sober man, woman and child, to raise their voices, their hearts and their hands in this sacred cause, and never hold their peace, never cease their prayers, never stay their exertions, till intemperance shall be banished.

My fellow-citizens—let us not forget what ground *we* occupy. This is the place selected by the father of his country, a man as distinguished for his temperance and virtue, as for his wisdom and valour—for the councils of the nation. It has become the residence of our Chief Magistrate—the heads of the different departments of the Government, and the ministers of foreign courts. It is here, that the Senators and Representatives of the nation assemble, and the Supreme Judiciary of the land holds its sessions. It is the resort of numerous strangers and visitors from every part of the country, and from every part of the world.

While, therefore, we are peculiarly disposed to assimilate the habits and manners of those who visit us, we occupy a station equally favourable to the dissemination of knowledge, temperance, and virtue.

Let us then be vigilant and faithful, and while we disseminate principles of temperance abroad, let us practise them at home.

If the prospect appears gloomy, on account of the small success which has attended our efforts thus far, be not disheartened. It is not so elsewhere. We are not called upon to be pioneers, nor to labour alone in this cause. The alarm has been sounded through the land. The voice of a Beecher, a Nott, and a Hewitt, has been heard, and the nation is beginning to awake. The work has been commenced. Intemperance has taken the alarm. It is already beginning to assume the livery of rags, and is retiring from high places, to hide itself in hovels, and dens and caves. Let us take fresh courage then, and if we cannot go before, let us not be far behind in this benevolent enterprize.

