

MISCELLANY.

*From the American Museum.*

*Oration in praise of drunkenness.*

*Delivered by a student of Princeton college, at a late commencement.*

I Am neither insensible of your dignity nor my own weakness; yet, if you were better, and I worse, as I am doomed to speak, I expect you will spare me the trouble of making any apology for my presumption. I am sure that I may make large allowances for your goodness and generosity; yet I must confess that I rather wish, than hope to please. What I am about to trouble you with is a few reflections on deep drinking and drunkenness, the utility of which I mean to point out. A subject that the present depravity of our age renders peculiarly interesting.

Any man, who is in the least degree conversant in public life, must be sensible of this. It is no uncharitable calculation to suppose, that one half of the human race have in a great measure deserted the cause of Bacchus; have shamefully turned their backs on the sparkling glass and flowing bowl, and gone, in common with the beasts of the field, to quench their thirst at the purling stream or bubbling fountain; or, if at any time they are prevailed upon to taste the nectareous juice, it is done in such a sparing and timid manner, as does dishonour to the profession of drinking. If we look back into the early ages of the world, we will find Noah more than middling well fuddled with the produce of his new vineyard; but as we never hear of his repeating it the second time, and seeing that all his other actions are far from bespeaking him a good subject of Bacchus, we cannot recommend him for an example. Any man may stumble upon a good action, but it is perseverance alone that merits applause. Encouraged by wine, ancient Lot laid the foundation of two great and populous nations, Moab and the children of Ammon. And I doubt not, but many honourable and useful families, of more recent times, owe their origin to the nocturnal excursions of the adventurous and intriguing bacchanal. Alexander the Great had natural ferocity enough to deal death and destruction among his enemies; but to wine alone he was indebted for that generous ardour which enabled him to stab and murder his most faithful and affectionate friends. To wine at last he

surrendered his pretended immortality, which was nothing more than a particular kind of drunkenness. But we need not search the pages of antiquity for examples to recommend this water of life. The many advantages arising from a full stomach and a rocking head, will be evident enough to any who will but make the experiment. Nay, less than experience, observation alone may serve our turn. We can easily discover that words are altogether insufficient to give us an idea of the gladness of the drunkard's heart. His ineffable raptures are either expressed by wry faces, winking eyes, or loud and inarticulate roars. What inward strength of mind and greatness of soul must he suck from his bottle, when he can wallow in mire, or perhaps in something fouler, without the least discomposure; can sweetly kiss his mother earth, embrace the filth of the dunghill, or bathe in the loathsome dregs of a common sewer, shall I say without repining—nay, even with complacency and delight! How often do we see him, from some internal heart-felt joy, extending his jaws, and bursting into thundering laughter, without any of those exterior causes which generally provoke the sober fool to mirth! But this is not all; drunkenness will also effectually purge away that foolish sympathy which persons would otherwise feel for human nature in distress; so that if a man find it necessary for the good order of his house that his wife should be kicked out of doors—or, for the support of his funds, that his neighbour's throat should be cut, and the money transferred into his own chest, a plentiful draught of good West-India will enable him to perform either the one or the other, with as much bravery and unrelenting fury as if he had been bred among the infernals. And after all this, how little need he regard law, justice, or the worst consequences that can possibly ensue! A plentiful potion of the same liquor which enabled him to commit this action, will also embolden him undauntedly to encounter the punishment to which it may expose him. And if it should even cost him his life, death is an evil we have ail to combat, and perhaps few of us will make our exit like him, with pomp and parade. For your encouragement, ye heroes of the bottle, attend to the issue of this fortunate man: he shall be endowed, as it were, with the spirit of prophecy, and be able to predict the very day and manner of his death; at his last hour he shall be punctually waited upon by the officers of the state, and a numerous train of a lower order; while others are walking on foot he shall be borne in a vehicle, with a particular badge of ho-

nour about his neck; and lastly, he shall swing away his life in airy circles, without a groan or a sigh, raised from the earth above the gaping and admiring, not to say envying world.

When the soft passion of love, with all its cares and anxieties, takes possession of the aching breast, it reduces the man who is not wise enough to seek consolation from his bowl, to the condition of a fawning spaniel, ready to lick the dust off his mistress's feet, and willing to receive a single kiss as an eternal obligation—but the son of Bacchus approaches his fair with a bold front and a resolute mein, as if determined to insist on an immediate surrender, he comes at once to the point, without hesitation or circumlocution. His loud, and consequently persuasive eloquence, added to the shower of nectar blown from his liquorish mouth, at every emphatical word, together with the fragrance proceeding from his stomach, surcharged with wholesome brandy, cannot fail to soften the most obdurate nymph.

Horace, the great master of lyric poetry among the Latins, has discovered the high value he set upon drunkenness, in words to this effect: "What is beyond the power of drunkenness? It discovers the most important secrets, thrusts the coward into battle, and removes the burden of anxiety from the mind." But we are all as sensible as Horace was what extraordinary effect it produces in most of those cases. How often do we see the drunkard so full of bravery that he will nobly rush into the most imminent danger, without the least necessity! I have known a man who, when drunk, would strip himself as naked as Adam in his innocence, and run headlong into thickets of briars and thorns, to the great admiration of every beholder. What more need I say to recommend it?—How amiable does this set of men always appear! View them in the streets, and you will find them attended by a numerous train of shouting applauders—view them in their houses, and you will find them busied, instructing their children in the useful science of singing lascivious songs; but if words should be wanting, the voice is still kept up, and their melodious notes may fitly be compared to the enchanting voice of of the crow or juckdaw, those masters of harmony, among the feathered tribe.

FOREIGN NEWS.

LONDON, JUNE 13.

ADVICE from Flanders mentions that the Austrians had crossed the