

knowledge of at least the simpler practices of business, and to that spread of intelligence which naturally arises from an intercourse of mind in which each has somewhat to impart and somewhat to acquire. But they lead also, in too many instances, to the formation of intemperate habits among the leading members. There is the procession and the ball, with their necessary accompaniments; the meeting begun with business ends too often in conviviality; and there are few acquainted with such institutions who cannot assign to each its own train of victims.

Another grand cause of this gigantic evil of intemperance, — a cause which fortunately exists no longer, save in its effects, — was of a political nature. On the breaking out of the revolutionary war, almost every man in the kingdom fit to bear arms became a soldier. Every district had its embodied yeomanry or local militia, every town its volunteers. Boys who had just shot up to their full height were at once metamorphosed into heroes, and received their monthly pay; and, under an exaggerated assumption of the military character, added to an unwonted command of pocket-money, there were habits of reckless intemperance formed by thousands and tens of thousands among the people, which have now held by them for more than a quarter of a century after the original cause has been removed, and which are passing downwards, through the influence of example, to add to the amount of crime and wretchedness in other generations.

In no respect does the last age differ more from the present than in the amount of general intelligence possessed by the people. It is not yet seventy years since Burke estimated the reading public of Great Britain and Ireland at about eighty thousand. There is a single Scotch periodical of the present day that finds as many