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**A SERMON**  
ON  
**INTEMPERANCE.**

BY WM. J. ARMSTRONG.

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RICHMOND, VA.

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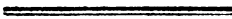
THE  
EVILS OF INTEMPERANCE, AND THE DUTY OF THE  
TEMPERATE:

**A SERMON,**

PREACHED AT THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

**RICHMOND, VA.**

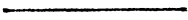
On the day of Fasting and Prayer on account of Intemperance,  
appointed by the General Assembly of the  
Presbyterian Church.



**BY WM. J. ARMSTRONG.**



*Published by the Temperance Society of Richmond.*



**RICHMOND, VA.**

PRINTED BY J. MACFARLAN, 13TH-STREET.

1820.



## A SERMON.



EPHESIANS V, 11.—“ *And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.*”

TRUTH and holiness are compared in the scriptures, to light. The figure illustrates their utility and beauty, and the happiness they confer. So darkness is but another name for error, ignorance, and sin; in their nature hurtful and hateful, and the parents of misery. Sinful actions and courses, are works and ways of darkness. They shrink from the light of truth; they put out the eyes of the soul, as they darken the understanding, debase the affections, and blunt the conscience; and they hurry their victims down to the blackness of darkness forever. In the text the Apostle probably alludes to the unhallowed rites, which the heathen celebrated in honor of their false deities. These were termed *mysterics*. They were celebrated for the most part in the night. They were studiously concealed from all but the initiated, who were bound by solemn oaths not to disclose them. Whatever might have been their original design, they soon came to be scenes of excess, impurity, and riot. With the strictest propriety the Apostle terms them unfruitful, and works of darkness; and exhorts christians to have no fellowship with them—no participation in them. But rather, as the followers of a holy and benevolent master; the professors of a pure and affectionate religion; to bear testimony against them, and by all proper means to dissuade others

from joining in rites so unholy and destructive. Excessive drinking, was one of the evils of these dark and mischievous orgies. It would seem from what follows in the 18th verse, that the Apostle has a special reference to this, when he speaks of the works of darkness. He there adds, "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess," or as it is more literally rendered by another, *by which cometh dissoluteness—universal corruption of mind and manners; moral putrefaction.* But be ye filled with the spirit; with the pure and joyful emotions which the Holy Ghost awakens in the heart that is entirely given to God. We are therefore not departing from the mind of the Spirit in the text, when we consider it as a divine injunction, to have no manner of participation in intemperance; but rather to make every exertion to arrest its progress, and destroy it altogether. It is therefore an appropriate subject for our meditation, on this day, set apart as a season of special humiliation before God, on account of this prevailing sin of our land; and it points out our duty in relation to that evil against which we pray, and over which we mourn.

Let us seriously consider,—The extent and enormity of the evil—The manner in which we have participated in it, or are in danger of doing so—And the course we are bound to pursue if we would have no fellowship with it, but rather reprove it.

As to the extent, to which intemperance prevails, in our land, it is impossible to arrive at an estimate perfectly accurate. Facts however are known, which bear testimony to its wide and appalling prevalence, and they are confirmed, by the observation of every one. It pervades our whole land. There is not a town, village or neighborhood, to which its ravages have not extended. There is

scarcely a family, that does not now mourn over some near and dear relative, infected by it. Its victims are found among all classes of society. In forms somewhat different but with a malignity equally fatal, it has seized upon the learned, the polite, the affluent ; the active enterprising and public spirited ; and the thriftless, ignorant and indigent. It has entered the hut of the laborer, the mechanic's shop, the merchant's counting-house, the school, the court of justice, the hall of legislation, the pale of the church, the very pulpit. From the tavern, and the tippling shop, its native haunts ; it has found its way, into the convivial party, the gay assembly the grave meeting for business, the circle about the parlor fire, the retirement of the bed-chamber. The amount of intoxicating liquors annually consumed in our country is enormous. Not less by computation than 50,000,000 of gallons. More than four gallons, for each individual, old and young, in our whole population. If we suppose that one half of this population is composed of children, and persons who do not taste of ardent spirits, then for the residue, there will remain more than eight gallons per annum to each person. If of this half, we suppose that one third drink ardent spirits seldom, and in small quantities, so as to consume but one gallon annually, then the remaining four millions, will drink on an average, twelve gallons each, yearly, or more than one gill each, per day. If we suppose that of these four millions, three-fourths use only one half that amount, then the remaining million, will consume on an average thirty gallons each, per annum ; Enough to constitute them, *drunkards* ; and to bring them within that awful sentence, which excludes such forever from the kingdom of Heaven. Enough, to burn out pro-

erty, character, conscience, reason and life, in a few years. Computations made from other data, fix the number of habitually intemperate persons in our land, at from three to five hundred thousand; and the number of deaths produced by intemperance every year at from thirty thousand to forty eight thousand, or from eighty to one hundred and thirty every day! This last estimate is based upon bills of mortality in our towns, and records kept by physicians in extensive practice and of known intelligence and integrity. What a wide spreading pestilence! What a desolating plague is here! More than thirty thousand victims are annually sacrificed at the shrine of this bloody Moloch! More than 30,000 immortal beings annually borne by this torrent of liquid fire, into the unquenchable flames of the burning gulf! Half a million of our fellow citizens slowly consuming on the altars of this demon, by fires their own hands have kindled; and millions more, preparing by habits every day gaining strength, to take their places, as fast as they have completed the work of self-immolation. Who that has the heart of a man can contemplate this spectacle without shuddering? Where is the Christian who will not fervently implore Almighty wisdom and love speedily to interpose for the destruction of this cruel tyrant and the rescue of his miserable victims!—But let us examine the evil more closely and consider its *enormity*, as well as its extent. Take one of the victims of intemperance, and see how much he sins and how much he suffers. It robs him of property; for his money is spent, his time is consumed, he is made unfit for labor, and incapable of the management of business, and liable to be duped and cheated by every sharper. It robs him of character; for who can respect a drunkard, who can confide in him, who can love him.



He has lost his self-respect ; he is unfit to be trusted ; he makes himself loathsome ; and others may and ought to treat him as he deserves. It destroys his usefulness ; for when he parts with his character, the opportunity and the capacity of doing good to others are at an end. It destroys his health ; no constitution can bear for a length of time, the alternate frenzied excitement and torpid lethargy of intemperance ; the frequent exposures it occasions ; the sudden and violent attacks of disease it invites. It robs him of peace of mind. While he has any remaining sensibility, how can he reflect upon what he has parted with, to gratify a brutish appetite, without the keenest remorse ; how can he consider to what he has reduced himself without burning shame ; how can he look forward to an early and dishonored grave and a terrible account, without distressing alarm. It destroys his reason ; for every time he is intoxicated, this candle of the Lord in the soul of man, is partially extinguished, and at each sober interval it burns more dimly, until at length it goes out altogether, and the drunkard becomes an idiot or a maniac. It ruins his soul ; for, it separates him from the society of the pious and throws him among the profane ; it shuts him out from the means of grace, or unfits him for deriving any benefit from them ; it stimulates his appetites ; inflames his passions ; destroys his self-command ; and makes him a willing tool for the devil or wicked men, in the commission of any crime. Thus it renders him incapable of heavenly society and employments, and brings upon him the curse of that awful being who has ranked the drunkard with thieves and adulterers, and solemnly declared, that he shall not inherit the kingdom of God. What a catalogue of guilt and misery is here. Property, character, usefulness, health, peace of mind,

reason, conscience, the immortal welfare of the soul, all, all engulfed in this abyss! And this is done by more than thirty thousand of our fellow-citizens every year! Is there not cause for humiliation fasting and prayer in view of this frightful mass of sin and woe? But this is a very inadequate estimate of the wretchedness and crime resulting from intemperance. These thirty thousand drunkards who annually die and whose places are filled by others; the three hundred thousand, who are constantly to be found in the community; are all social beings. Many of them are husbands and fathers—all of them are members of families who are constantly exposed to ruin by their example and influence; and who if they are not led to participate in their sins, must share in their sufferings. Who may describe the misery an intemperate father, or husband, or brother, or son, inflicts upon those near and dear relatives, whom it is his most sacred duty to cherish and make happy—misery that is keen, and admits neither of alleviation nor sympathy, just in proportion as they are amiable and affectionate. Disappointment, mortification and sorrow, that prey upon the spirit, dry up the springs of life, and often consign their heart broken victim to an early grave. Oh if all the crimes and woes, intemperance has caused in our own land during the past year alone, all the suicide and murder perpetrated by drunkards, could now pass at once, in dark and terrible array before our minds—surely there is not one of us who would not wonder at his past supineness while the work of desolation was going on around him—who would not seriously ask, is any part of this frightful mass owing to my agency or my neglect! Who would not be willing to make any exertions, submit to any sacrifices, and practice any self-denial, which might contri-

bute to arrest the march of the destroyer and stay the work of death!

My brethren, have we not participated in it? Are we not in danger of doing so? Let us examine. *What are the causes of this* wide prevalence of a vice so fraught with misery and ruin? It is not any natural relish or thirst for ardent spirits. Children almost uniformly loathe it. Unless it is diluted and disguised with sugar and syrups and aromatic substances, to make it palatable, they reject it with abhorrence. It is not any natural craving of stimulants, which is gratified by ardent spirits because it can be thus done more easily and cheaply than in any other way. For other stimulants not more hurtful, may be had with equal and even greater ease—and among some other nations, not less ardent in temperament than ourselves, intemperance is almost unknown. Whence then the prevalence of intemperance among ourselves? It is no doubt to be ascribed mainly to the extensive prevalence of the habit of keeping ardent spirits in families as an article of diet, whose daily use is thought almost indispensable to health and comfort. We are imitative beings, and especially in the spring time of life. Children and young persons see ardent spirits habitually used on various occasions and for various purposes; as a preservative against heat and cold and disease; as a means of sustaining exertion, relieving fatigue and exciting languor, as a mark of friendship, as a test of patriotism, a token of hospitality, an enlivener of the convivial party, a zest for social intercourse, an expression of joy, a soother of grief. What wonder where such an example is set them, by those whom they esteem and love, that they should desire to imitate it. How should they dream of danger, from that which they behold so familiarly used, and so highly prized.

Many temperate parents go much farther than this. They take pains to initiate their children into the use of this deadly poison, and to form them to the habit of dram-drinking, daily, almost before they leave the nurse's arms: And yet they are surprised when their children grow up and become drunkards! Here is the great source of intemperance—This is the fountain of those poisonous streams that deluge our land with misery and crime.—*The ordinary use of intoxicating liquors by the great mass of respectable families who abhor the sin of drunkenness.* A relish for them is early formed. Their daily use in moderate quantities soon grows into a habit, which renders them essential to daily comfort. In a little while, an increase of the quantity is necessary to produce the accustomed effect upon the digestive organs and the animal spirits. Every day they become more necessary, and the system craves a little more than at first. He who has thus formed a habit of temperate drinking, is in the high road to drunkenness. This is the testimony of all experience. He may be arrested in his course and led to abandon it altogether, or he may be kept from going forward with accelerating velocity. But the probability is that he will not. No fact on this subject is better established than this, *That the daily moderate use of ardent spirits leads almost inevitably to intemperance.* This it often does to such a degree as to impair the mind, shorten life and ruin the soul, where the person is never seen intoxicated, or branded a drunkard. Many a one will stand disclosed in this hateful character at the bar of God, who was not suspected of it on earth—It will exclude many a one from the pure society of Heaven, whom it did not shut out from the circles of the temperate among men. Whence are recruits fur-

nished to the ranks of intemperance? They are daily thinned. Death sweeps away from them more than thirty thousand a year. Yet they are still full. Whence are they recruited? Not from these who have previously abstained altogether. Few are so mad as deliberately, and of set purpose, to commence drunkards all at once. No, it is from *the temperate drinkers of ardent spirits*, and of these more than thirty thousand are every year transformed into drunkards! Almost five thousand of the citizens of this commonwealth—more than thirty thousand of our countrymen, who are now called sober men, who now abhor this beastly crime, will become drunkards within twelve months! So many sons, and brothers, and husbands, now respectable and beloved, will in one short year, become the scourge of their families, the disgrace of their friends, the pest of their neighborhoods, nuisances to society, dragging out a wretched and loathesome existence a little while, till death consigns their putrid bodies to the grave, and their ruined souls to hell! They will slide into this character by degrees, in a way scarcely perceptible to themselves. The sin is deceitful, almost beyond any other. It steals upon its victim so slowly, and coils itself around him so gently, that he fears no danger, and feels no alarm, until he is fairly in its folds. Then it is too late to struggle. His doom is fixed. Its grasp is death. Its venom, once infused into the system circulates through every part, till the whole mass is corrupt.—Now my brethren, who of us participate in the sin of intemperance? Does it spring from the habitual moderate use of ardent spirits? Who of us have lent the sanction of our example and our influence to that? Who of us keep it in the parlor for our friends, in the nursery for our children, in the

kitchen for our servants? Who of us deal in it, or speak of it, as a necessary of life, an article indispensable to daily comfort? Who of us, though we may not have positively encouraged the use of it, have failed to bear a firm, faithful and affectionate testimony against it? If it is the ordinary use of ardent spirits by the temperate, that keeps up the false notion of their importance to health and comfort—if it is this, that renders it creditable to deal in the article, and prevents many good men from being sensible of the sin of lending their agency to circulate it through the community—(for certainly one good man may sell what other good men may buy,) if it is this that causes it to be presented in so many forms, on so many occasions, and in every corner of society, to tempt the unwary—if it is this that encourages so many of the young to form a taste for it, and a habit of using it without any suspicion of their danger—if it is this which prevents the very first approaches toward intemperance from alarming the unhappy individual and his friends in time for his rescue—if in short, it is *this ordinary use of intoxicating liquors* that has hitherto promoted drunkenness more than any other cause, and that will infallibly have the same effect until it is entirely done away, and the bottle of spirits is seen in respectable families only by the side of Laudanum and Camphor—Then who of us has not cause to be humbled and penitent before God, for having unwittingly countenanced the evil, and participated in it, at least by failing to bear a proper testimony against it, and to pray and labor as we ought to arrest its progress?

And now it is easy to see in the third place, what is our duty if we would have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. It is not so much, to lift up our voices against drunkenness.


The very intemperate are often ready to join us in this—and none are more forward in expressing their abhorrence of it, than those whose feet are already upon slippery places; who are already upon the brink of the boiling whirlpool that has engulfed so many thousands. No, it is by abstaining from it entirely ourselves, and using all our influence to persuade others to join us. It is by adopting as our motto in relation to it, “Touch not, Taste not, Handle not;” upon conscientious principles; firmly, but meekly—in the spirit of love to God, and love to man. It is by making every proper exertion, to circulate through the community information on this subject, and by holding up the light of truth to dissipate the false and fatal notion that while the excessive use of ardent spirits is hateful and ruinous; its ordinary moderate consumption, the very fountain of the evil, is not only safe and innocent, but salutary and creditable. When the public mind is once undeceived on this subject—when the ordinary use of ardent spirits comes to share, *as it ought, the condemnation of drunkenness*, and parents warn their children and guard them against this, as they would against the other; and to set out the decanter, or to present the glass of julep or toddy to a sober man, is regarded as an invitation to drunkenness, an insult, and not a compliment; intemperance will soon be checked. No respectable man will then buy or sell the liquid poison. All dealing in it, except as a medicine, will then be confined to drunkards, and to such as are willing to be known, as the patrons of drunkenness. These will soon be removed. Death will rapidly take them away and relieve society of its burden, and none will rise up to take their places. But until this is done, nothing can be effected. The same causes, will still produce the same

**effects.** So long as ardent spirits continue to be an article of ordinary use in families, you might as well attempt to bind the air, or bid the flame descend, or roll the stream back to its source among the hills, as to check intemperance. Families will still rear up drunken members, and reap in suffering and shame, the fruit of their own sin and folly. The scorpion whose sting is death will still be nurtured at the domestic fire-side. Intemperance will still triumph in the ruin of property, character, health, conscience, peace of mind, and the immortal interests of the soul! The torrent that has for years past, been sweeping away so many of our fellow-citizens, with all that is dear and sacred and valuable to man, for this life, and the life to come, will rise higher, and rush onward with increasing impetuosity, till it has undermined the foundations of all our institutions, civil, social and religious; till individual dissoluteness, is multiplied into national degeneracy and corruption, and we become a nation of drunkards, to be loathed, hated and scorned, not envied and admired by the nations of the earth. There is no remedy but abstinence to such an extent as to banish ardent spirits from the tables and the sideboards of all who would not be known as advocates and promoters of intemperance. An entire change as to the safety and propriety of its ordinary use, must be effected in public sentiment, or we are a lost people! And cannot this be effected? It can. The professors of religion in the United States might do it, if they were of one mind to attempt it, by precept and example, and prayer to God, in a single year. Among a free and enlightened people, the power of truth, where it can be fairly brought to bear upon public sentiment is irresistible. In this case it would be enhanced by the observation and



experience of every candid and reflecting man. Much has been already accomplished in some parts of our land, by the example and exertions of a few. Let the friends of God and man, the lovers of their country, the foes of drunkenness, every where engage in the work. Let them commence in their own persons, and their own families. Let them combine their efforts to persuade others to imitate their example—Let them begin to day. The work will be accomplished. God will smile upon it. He will pour out his spirit upon the land, and raise up a standard against this enemy, when his people cry to him. Let each of us then from this hour, have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

SOCIETY FOR  
THE  
PROMOTION OF TEMPERANCE.



At a meeting of gentlemen at the 2d Baptist Church in the City of Richmond, on Jan. 7th, 1829, for the purpose of devising some measures for the promotion of Temperance, Mr David I. Burr was called to the chair, and James C. Crane, appointed Secretary.

Prayer was offered by the Rev. Eli Ball.

The following resolution was unanimously adopted :

*Resolved*, That in the opinion of this meeting it is expedient to form a Temperance Society at this time.

Rev. E. Ball, Rev. Wm. J. Armstrong and Mr William Crane, were appointed a Committee to prepare a Constitution and present to the meeting.

The Committee reported a Preamble and Constitution, which, after some amendments and additions, were adopted, and are as follows :

**PREAMBLE.**

Whereas the prevalence of Intemperance is one of the sorest evils that afflict our country—sweeping away the property, character and lives of thousands of our fellow

citizens ; plunging a multitude of families into incalculable disgrace and misery, and multiplying crimes of every description—And whereas, there seems to be no practicable mode of arresting the progress of this evil but by a union of effort on the part of the temperate to discontinue the use of ardent spirits altogether, and to affix upon every form and degree of intemperance the stigma of universal reprobation ; the subscribers deeming it their duty as friends of their country and of their fellow-men, to contribute as far as they can by their example and influence, to bring about such a state of public sentiment as shall do this effectually—do form themselves into a society under the title of

**THE RICHMOND SOCIETY FOR THE PROMOTION OF TEMPERANCE :**

*And do hereby agree and promise to observe the following*

**CONSTITUTION.**

**ART. 1st.** The members of this Society shall, and do hereby, bind themselves henceforth to abstain from the use of ardent spirits of any kind, except as they shall be necessary as a medicine ; and do promise, individually by their example and influence, to discountenance and discourage their use, and to promote temperance in all things.

2d. This Society, as a body, shall have no connexion with any Church or Religious Association.

3d. The officers of this Society shall be, a President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer ; who, with five other members shall be elected annually, and shall form an

executive committee, whose duty it shall be to manage the concerns and carry into effect the orders of this Society, by publications and other modes of argument and persuasion, to promote its object; three members shall be a quorum for business.

4th. The funds of the Society shall be derived from voluntary contributions.

5th. Any member who shall be considered as manifestly infringing the terms of this Association and counteracting its influence, shall be liable to expulsion by a vote of two-thirds of the members present at any regular meeting of the Society.

6th. Any member may withdraw from this Society at any time, by giving notice of his wish to do so to the Secretary.

7th. The Executive Committee shall fix the time and place of the annual meetings of the Society, and call special meetings when they deem it necessary.

8th. A vote of two-thirds of the members present at any regular meeting of the Society, shall be competent to make any changes in this constitution, not subversive of the first article thereof.

A number of gentlemen then came forward, and were enrolled as members of the Society.

The following officers were elected for the ensuing year :

MR DAVID I. BURE, *President.*

MR GEORGE WOODFIN, *Vice-President.*

MR OLIVER A. SHAW, *Secretary.*

MR J. C. CRANE, *Treasurer.*

And Messrs Benjamin Brand, William Crane, Samuel Reeve, Stephen Cowley and Wm. Street, other members of the Executive Committee.

The following resolution was adopted :

*Resolved*, That the Chairman and Secretary be requested to procure the publication of the proceedings of this meeting in the public papers of this City.

Prayer by Rev. William J. Armstrong ; and then the meeting adjourned.

JAMES. C. CRANE, *Secretary*.

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# HENRY'S COMMENTARY

ON THE BIBLE.

## *An Exposition of the Old and New Testament.*

By Matthew Henry, late minister of the Gospel, a new edition, edited by the Rev. George Burder and the Rev. Jos. Hughes, A. M. with a life of the author by the Rev. Samuel Palmer; and a Preface by Archibald Alexander, D.D.

### CONDITIONS.

This work is published in Six large Super Royal Octavo Volumes, of about one thousand pages each, comprising about one fifth more matter than is contained in Scott's Commentary, and delivered to subscribers in volumes, at Three Dollars and Fifty Cents per volume, well done up in strong boards; or Four Dollars per volume, handsomely and strongly bound.

*For Sale by A. WORKS, Richmond, Va.*

The following is an extract from the Preface by Dr Alexander. "This work has now been before the Christian community for more than a hundred years, and has, from its first publication, been so well received and is so generally approved that all recommendations of the work itself seems to be now superfluous. It has, indeed, become a standard work in Theology; not with the people of one denomination only, but with the friends of sound piety and evangelical religion of every name. Many other valuable Commentaries, it is true, have been given to the public since this work was first edited; and have deservedly gained for themselves a high estimation and extensive circulation. But it may be safely said, that Henry's Exposition of the Bible has not been superseded by any of these publications; and in those points in which its peculiar excellence consists, remains unrivalled. For some particular purposes and in some particular respects, other Commentaries may be preferable; but, taking it as a whole, and as adapted to every class of readers, this Commentary may be said to combine more excellencies, than any work of the kind which was ever written in any language. And this is not the opinion of one or a few persons, but thousands of judicious theologians have been of the same mind; and it may be predicted that as long as the English language shall remain unchanged, Henry's Exposition will be highly appreciated by the lovers of true religion.

## PAPER WAREHOUSE.

A. WORKS is receiving an extensive assortment of PAPER, comprising Fine, Superfine and Extra Superfine Letter and Foolscap, Blue Vellum, Blue Laid, Pink Post, &c. which he will sell at the New York cash prices.

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LETTER and CAP PAPER, together with a general assortment of Stationery; all which he offers for sale on the most favorable terms.

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**A. WORKS** has published Bickersteth on Prayer. An Excellent work. The Rev. S. Taylor speaking of it says, "It is a work adapted to the age in which we live. It is one of the few recent productions, which may be read without a secret consciousness of throwing away time to gratify an idle curiosity. Every page contains something amply to repay the reader for the labor and time of perusal. The book does not become worthless because it has been read, but should be bound, because it will bear to be read and pondered again and again. To say that it is the best treatise on the subject which has ever been published in our country, is no disparagement to the merits of the others; for it is their merits which furnished him the materials of its value."

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**SCRIPTURE HELP**, by the same author. It has four Maps, and is worthy a place in every Library.

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**L**ETTERS ON FEMALE CHARACTER, by Mrs Virginia Cary. In a Review published in the Visitor and Telegraph, the Reviewer says, "Its style is generally lively and interesting, and often energetic and striking to a very unusual degree. *It ought to be purchased and read by mothers and presented to their daughters.* It is worth scores of those new publications which have been "once read" by multitudes in these states, within ten years past. The tendency of the book is good. Its influence on those who read it must be salutary, and we have no doubt that it is to have an important share in modelling the character of our southern fair, to an adaptation to the exigencies of the part which they are to bear in the reformation and illumination of our world. It is to an eminent degree, a practical book."

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**A. WORKS** will shortly put to press another Work by Mrs Virginia Cary,