

Ode for a Social Meeting

With Slight Alterations by a Teetotaler

Here is a little poem I sent a short time since to a committee for a certain celebration. I understood that it was to be a festive and convivial occasion, and ordered myself accordingly. It seems the president of the day was what is called a "teetotaler." I received a note from him in the following words, containing the copy subjoined, with the emendations annexed to it.

"DEAR SIR, — Your poem gives good satisfaction to the committee. The sentiments expressed with reference to liquor are not, however, those generally entertained by this community. I have therefore consulted the clergyman of this place, who has made some slight changes, which he thinks will remove all objections, and keep the valuable portions of the poem. Please to inform me of your charge for said poem. Our means are limited, etc., etc., etc.

"Yours with respect."

Here it is with the slight alterations.

Come! fill a fresh bumper, for why should we go
While the ^{logwood} ~~nectar~~ still reddens our cups as they flow?
Pour out the ^{decoction} ~~rich juices~~ still bright with the sun,
Till o'er the brimmed crystal the ^{dye-stuff} ~~rubies~~ shall run.

^{half-ripened apples}
The ~~purple-globed clusters~~ their life-dews have bled;
How sweet is the ^{taste} ~~breath~~ of the ^{sugar of lead.} ~~fragrance they shed!~~
For summer's ^{rank poisons} ~~last roses~~ lie hid in the ^{wines! ! !} ~~wines~~—
That were garnered by ^{stable-boys smoking long-nines.} ~~maidens who laughed thro' the vines~~—
Then a ^{scowl} ~~smile~~, and a ^{howl} ~~glass~~, and a ^{scoff} ~~toast~~, and a ^{sneer,} ~~cheer~~,
For all ^{strychnine and whiskey, and ratsbane and beer!} ~~the good wine, and we've some of it here!~~
In cellar, in pantry, in attic, in hall,
Down, down with the tyrant that masters us all !
Long live the ~~gay servant that laughs for us all!~~