

Original Communications.

THE FATAL DRAUGHT.

By Rev. Peter Stryker, D.D.

"Sir, will you come this afternoon, and attend the funeral of my wife?"

Often before had I received such invitations, for alas! a large part of a pastor's duty is to comfort the bereaved, and assist them in paying due respect to the dead they must soon bury out of their sight. But this was a peculiar case. The first glance at the countenance of the stranger who stood before me, afforded ample evidence of this fact. Poor man! he looked the very personification of despair. He was young, probably not over twenty-five years of age. He was apparently in humble circumstances, yet very respectable in his person and demeanor.

His answer to a few general questions which I necessarily asked him for information, revealed a desire on his part to tell me his history. His heart was overflowing, and it was an act of benevolence to listen to his tale of sorrow. The account he gave of himself is full of painful interest. I rehearse it not because it is tragical, but because I trust it may suggest some useful lessons to my readers. Let me give it as coming from his lips, although the words may not be precisely those he used in relating it to me.

"I was married about a year ago to her who now lies a corpse at my dreary home. She was kind and affectionate, and very pleasantly we lived together. I was brought up in the Reformed Dutch Church, and attended the ministry of the Rev. Dr. S., of whose church my mother is still a member. After marriage my wife and myself attended the Methodist Episcopal Church. We often went to the meetings held on week evenings as well as those held on the Sabbath day, and both of us became deeply interested in the subject of religion. With good health, a prosperous business, industrious habits, and affection for each other, and I trust an increasing regard for God and holy things, life with us passed pleasantly along.

"But oh! how short the joy! Through the treachery of one who professed friendship, the money which for several years I had accumulated by my industry and economy, in one day, was torn from me. I lost my position in business, and was left penniless. This exceedingly mortified as well as discouraged me.

"With a weary heart, I left N., and in the great commercial metropolis, New York, sought to obtain business and establish a home. Having obtained comfortable and respectable apartments, I brought hither my wife and furniture, and our hope was, with youth and strength, and earnestness on our side, we would be prosperous, and in time be able to regain that which we had lost.

"But our misfortunes had only commenced. The landlord with whom I had formed an agreement, regardless of his word, and careful only to secure his own pecuniary interests, had let our rooms to others, and we were compelled to take temporary residence in a tenement house in a wretched part of the city. This greatly depressed us both. Still we rallied each other, hoped for better things, and tried to be cheerful.

"My first effort now was to find work. I am by trade a silver plater; and although only a journeyman, often do what is called over-work. The poisonous solutions used in our business I almost always had mixed at my home, ready to be used as opportunity offered. This gave me no care, as there were no children or servants about who might be injured by them. My wife knew all about the nature of these solutions, for she often saw me prepare and use them. Only a few days ago when I was preparing one of these solutions, she playfully asked if a draught of it would prove fatal. I replied, I did not know, probably it would, but certainly it would produce very serious injury to any one who might taste it.

"The day after this conversation I went out again in search of employment. Weary and unsuccessful I returned in the afternoon, and judge of my astonishment and mortification, when I perceived from her looks and words and actions that my wife was partially intoxicated. This was a new trial, and greater by far than all the others. We had both always been temperate, strictly temperate. How then had this occurred?

"When I questioned her she said an English woman had enticed her, and had induced her to drink a glass of liquor. I reproved her for being so intimate with a stranger, and especially for drinking with her. My poor wife—she was very quick in her temper—I cannot think she meant to kill herself. Stimulated by the vile liquor which she had taken; she surely could not have known what she was about. Instantly she became enraged at my words of censure, and nothing could I say to pacify her.

"With a sad heart I dropped into a chair, and leaned my head upon my hand, thinking what I could say to quiet her temper. While thus musing over my afflictions, I heard a click, and turning, saw my wife holding a cup—the poison cup—the very one she had a day or two before asked me about, and it was empty. She had just drained it of its contents. How do you like that, for a change? said she. The dreadful truth flashed over me. I saw it in the empty cup. I saw it in the already changing countenance of the loved, but erring one. She was poisoned, and that by

her own hand. I laid her upon the bed, and flew for the doctor. In a few moments I returned, but it was too late—the draught had proved fatal—she was dead. O sir, I am a wretched man. Pray for me, and come and speak a few kind words at the funeral of my poor wife."

This was substantially the story of the bereaved young husband as he related it to me. It filled my heart with sorrow and induced a train of reflections. There would be very little satisfaction, dear reader, for you to accompany me to the house of mourning. All that we can do there is to try to comfort the few disconsolate friends who weep around the coffin of that erring one. But there are lessons of instruction which may not be expressed in that circle, but which you and I should deeply lay to heart. Let us now glance at them.

1. One step in life leads to another. Human experience is a chain, and days and deeds furnish the links of which it is composed. The man who basely cheated that young mechanic out of his accumulated savings was guilty of murder. Perhaps he did not intend this. But he forged the first link in that chain which terminated in the fearful death we have noticed. May God have mercy on him and the thousand of other iron-hearted wretches in the commercial community who, like hungry beasts of prey, fatten on the bodies and souls of their weaker fellow mortals!

That landlord, who for a trifling consideration, violated his verbal contract and deprived that young couple of their home, was guilty of murder. He forged the second great link in that chain which led to death. May God have mercy on those rapacious capitalists who speculate on the hearts and hopes of the poor, and hesitate not to defraud the helpless if they can add a farthing to their own unhallowed abundance!

That rumseller who sold the drugged liquor which proved so evil in its consequences, and the stranger who, not content with making a brute of herself, enticed another to swerve from the path of sobriety and safety—they each were guilty of the crime of murder. It would be useless for such persons to say they will sell or give to those who wish to buy, or are willing to drink. The terrible effects of the liquors now in market are well known. They are nothing but poison. May God have mercy on the thousands of guilty vendors, and the ten thousands of guilty tempters who decoy the young and unstable in paths of inebriety and death!

The subject of cause and effect is very extensive. Let us see to it, when the great day of revelation appears, and these intricacies are unravelled, when our treacherous memory is revived, and truth in its various bearings and dates is revealed—let us see to it we do not then stand among the guilty throng who by temptation and fraud have brought ruin upon our neighbors and destroyed their soul and body.

2. That one glass of intoxicating liquor proved fatal, for its immediate effect led to the draught of poison. It is the first glass that always does the mischief. This makes the drunkard. This leads the drunkard often to the depths of crime as well as dissipation. If all would avoid the one glass, the first glass, what a different world this would be! No inebriate would then walk our streets, or roll in our gutters. Families would not be disgraced, and hearts and homes would not be rendered desolate. The scaffold would then hardly be known. Our prisons and jails might be closed, and officers of justice would be gentlemen of leisure, and civil law might hold a long and happy jubilee. Imagination can hardly picture the beautiful scene that would then spring to view. Earth would again be changed to Eden, and innocence and joy again bless our race.

And why not pray to God, and plead with man, and try with self to secure this blessed result? Why not, Christian Philanthropist? Why not, I ask, by example and persuasion, and earnest, holy, untiring influence, endeavor to dash to the ground that first glass, which so often leads to ruin? Fashionably lady, we pray you, do not with your irresistible voice and smile, ask that young man to take from your hand that one glass of sparkling beverage, for it may lead him to drunkenness, debauchery, eternal death. Mature Christian, do not lift that one glass to your lips, lest your child, or some beloved young friend, who depends much upon your example, should see the act, and, imitating you, drink, drink deeply, and die. Dear youth, listen to our important entreaty! Think well before you touch the intoxicating bowl. Look not upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder. Prov. xxiii. 31, 32.

There is a demon lurking in that one glass. His eye is fixed on you. He has selected you as his victim. Only drink, and he will take up his abode within you, and commence those insidious operations which will be likely to end in your everlasting destruction. Refuse the liquor, tread on the head of the vile serpent, and you will be safe. In this age of temptation, fraud and inebriation, the only snoutery for moral virtue, next to piety, is in total abstinence from all that will intoxicate, and the great hope is in the youth, who as yet is uncontaminated by the deadly poison.

3. What a dangerous thing is anger. Like a runaway horse, it breaks through all restraint, and considers not whither it goes, or what will be

the final result of its action. How careful should we be to keep our passions in control. Conscious of the fact that there is much in this world that is irritating, and that we are liable at any moment to meet with that which will tend to provoke us, it is the part of wisdom for each to guard himself against the trial, come in what form it may. By prayer, by the cultivation of meekness and forgiveness, by meditation, and more than all, by trust in Jesus and humble imitation of His forbearance and holy suffering, we should constantly brace ourselves for the season of provocation, which sooner or later will come.

Hasty brother, put your tongue under bonds to keep the peace. Subject your passions to bit and bridle, and then, like a good reinsman, hold on firmly and watchfully. Let your judgment ever preside over the citadel of your mind, and keep all the forces in thorough command. "Anger resteth in the bosom of fools." Eccl. vii. 9. "He that hath no rule over his own spirit, is like a city that is broken down and without walls." Prov. xxv. 28.

Go to the coffin of that young wife, and as you look upon that form dead and arrayed for burial, think of the folly of anger. One wicked thought, one wicked yielding to Satan, one hasty deed, and what a sad and awful result! And so it may be with you, passionate man. With your excitable disposition you are in constant and imminent danger. Be persuaded to watch and pray lest you enter into temptation. Restrain your thoughts and feelings, your words and deeds, or in some unguarded moment you may speak a word, or strike a blow which will end in disgrace, perhaps death to another or yourself.

"Passions indulged beyond a certain bound lead to a precipice, and plunge in woe the heedless agent."

REV. A. M. STEWART'S LETTERS—XVIII. CALIFORNIA STATE FAIR.

Words often change their meaning, as do persons their conditions, or a people their habits. Our English word FAIR, requires an academic education in order to comprehend its varied applications, and the ideas and things it is used to cover. With the adjective noun State prefixed we are not expected to write of things clear, beautiful, pure, open, favorable, candid, spotless or honest as may be done under this same volatile word. If as a State affair, the word be derived from the Latin Forum—all right. The Forum was a wide open space, where our Latin grandames with their gallants met together to talk, and gossip; and hear speeches and in general way kill time. The necessary Jew and cunning craftsman, though at first on the sly, introduced for sale their wares and pelf into this fashionable gathering. It was a hit. The thing grew, and the Forum became at length a Fair.

Church-fairs, charity fairs, county fairs, State fairs had I seen on the Atlantic slope even to repletion. A strong desire, however, existed to see a Fair on the Pacific side. This not so much in order to look upon the cattle, pigs and fast horses; the machinery and fine arts; the men and women on this side of our continent,—in all these the Atlantic side must still excel. My special desire was to look upon a collection of fruits and vegetables from all parts of California. On my preaching tour from middle Nevada to San Francisco this desire was gratified. Sacramento, the State Capital, was the place for the exhibition of 1868. Here I arrived when the show had been in progress for a week, and to continue in full blast for an additional seven days. Could State fair projects in Eastern, Middle, or Northern States manage to keep an immense gathering for two weeks together, with the interest unabated at their exhibitions? These Californians excel.

HORSE-RACING AND GAMBLING.

A sad yet general impression is deepening, that nearly all our Eastern State and county Fairs are fast degenerating—falling under the control of horse-jockeys, sharpers and blacklegs. Such exhibitions may and ought to be made honorably, pleasant and profitable, for advancing and perfecting the interests of horticulture, farming and mechanism. A hope did exist that California in her marvellous farming interests might be an exception—get a better start and do up Fairs more honestly, honorably and profitably. This hope is gone. Her anniversary has been seen and the impression was a deep and sad one, that the large majority of the gathering are sharpers, jockeys, blacklegs and abandoned women, and by their special influence the interest of the fair is kept up for two weeks together.

Our train from Nevada across the Sierra Nevada mountains arrived in Sacramento at 1 P.M. Stage, omnibus and carriage drivers were shouting at every street corner; "Four bits to the Fair grounds." These were out from the city two miles. I was soon off and there—paid my entrance fee of four bits, and stood within the large enclosure. My first inquiry was after the place of exhibition for fruits, manufactures and machinery; and I was coolly informed; "They were in the large pavilion back in the city and would be open in the evening." Sold to the gamblers was your correspondent; and he tried to make the best of his barter.

The show of horses, cattle and sheep was meagre and without special excellence. No pigs, turkeys, geese, ducks and chickens with which Eastern Fairs are always ornamented. The races were the fair, and were presently sounded. An

immense assembly of men and women, boys and girls was there. Rugged looking men, coarse women and rude boys and girls. Was this California? My heart was sick and hopes for her future dimmed. There was an openness, a perfection, a mere business matter in the stakes, the bets and the gambling, not heretofore understood. As two or three horses were parading and getting ready for the course; a crier, appointed for the purpose, mounted a stand with a clerk on each hand, and shouted; "Who bids?"—pointing to or naming such or such a horse. From hundreds down to fives were usually shouted with the money at the same time deposited on the spot—name and amount entered by the clerks. Thus each horse was gone over and his favorers heard from. The race came. Nothing extra either in horses or time; yet did that vast crowd of men and women sway to and fro, clap hands, shout and scream, as one or another poor animal, lashed to its utmost speed distances its competitor. A most degrading scene. Little in advance of a bull fight or the old gladiatorial show.

At and around the entrance to the race course were numerous large tents and hastily constructed wooden buildings, in which gambling was carried on, in forms, and to an extent, which in my ignorance had not hitherto been conceived. Being in for the show, I took an extended tour of observation through each and all of them. Piles of gold and silver, as in a bank, were on billiard card, dice and faro tables; and constantly changing hands. Here and there a fashionably dressed female was handling the dice and the money with a quickness and facility, which did credit to the most adroit blackleg. During my inspection, occasional banter for a stake and a throw were given. I escaped, however, by a neglect in early education, not knowing the difference between one card and another. California is thus reaping some of the sad fruits, outgrowths from that wild fever after gold which, in years past, so flooded all her territory; nor has as yet altogether abated. Strung along each side of the way from race course to city and into the city, were all manner of shows, gim-cracks, fables, wonders, and gory-manders—all with signs and voice inviting passers-by to enter and be amused for a consideration. It was in such a place that Whitfield erected his stand and successfully preached Christ. Oh! for Whitfield's zeal and eloquence here.

Evening exhibition. A new and beautiful world it seemed. In an immense pavilion hall, with high basement for fruits and vegetables and adjoining sheds for machinery, was held the fair proper. Not one of the crowd of racers and gamblers seemed to be present. A new generation of humanity was there. An assemblage of real gentlemen and ladies—refined, intelligent and interested—crowded the spacious corridors. How delightful by contrast with the gathering of the afternoon! Hope for California yet.

In machinery, manufactures and industrial arts, the Exhibition was pleasing and promising—yet had I seen larger and finer. My interest was in the basement among earth's immediate productions. Horticultural exhibitions and beautiful ones too, had been seen in various Atlantic States; yet nothing like this. I had never imagined that such productions grew on trees or in the ground. Such apples, pears, peaches, plums, nectarines, figs, lemons, oranges, pomegranates, almonds, strawberries—strawberries all the year round, and grapes, than which Eschschol could have yielded none finer. And all these produced with a certainty, a regularity, with an ease and in an abundance only equaled by the demand. Even now the amount of these coveted fruits far exceeds any demand or want. Abundance of fruits that would amaze Philadelphia marketers, decays upon the ground for lack of consumers. The vegetable growth is equally abundant, and even more wonderful. I almost hesitate, for fear of disbelief to name the weight of the vegetables—everything in California goes by weight. Onions and potatoes weighing pounds; and beets from ten to a hundred and fifty pounds. The enormous ones not the growth of a single season, but but of two or three years together. By easy cultivation this wonderful region may readily be made the "Garden of the world." May we not anticipate ere long a railroad from here to Philadelphia, New York, and Boston, and used for no other purpose than the speedy and not too costly transportation of California fruits and vegetables. Delightful union this between the Atlantic and Pacific.

A. M. STEWART. Sept., 1868.

OUR OWN MISSIONS.

Kansas City is on the extreme western border of Missouri. A few years since it was the headquarters of the Border Ruffians—the outpost of civilization. With great difficulty religion gained a foothold in that reckless community. A church was planted, other churches followed, there and beyond, far into the wilderness. The work goes on bravely.

On the first Sabbath of this month (October), Kansas City witnessed a strange sight—a thrilling scene. The Synod of Missouri were in session. Ten young men, all of them but two from the last senior class of New York Union Theological Seminary, college-bred, one of them a Colonel and another a Major in the Union Army, made application to be ordained to the work of the gospel ministry. Their application was grant-

ed. The ordination service took place in the evening. The use of the Southern Baptist Church was courteously granted for the occasion. It was a new thing under the sun. No such scene had ever before been witnessed beyond the Mississippi.

The next day they went forth to their work—the most of them among the new settlements in south-eastern Kansas,—all of them having been commissioned and sent forth by the Presbyterian Committee of Home Missions. The event was signalized by the prospective erection of the Synod of Kansas,—two new Presbyteries, Humboldt and Smoky Hill, having been created for the purpose.

These results, so cheering and so full of promise, have not been reached without a large outlay of missionary appropriations, involving a heavy burden for years to come. At the same time, new missionaries have been sent to feeble churches in the East, in the Center, and in other parts of the West—to Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, Colorado and California—others will soon be on their way to Wyoming Territory, and the Pacific coast.

The Committee have deemed it their sacred duty to avail themselves of every providential opportunity to send forth laborers of suitable qualifications into the vast harvest field, and to extend the bounds of the Church as far and as fast as God opened the way. At the same time, they have withheld aid from none of the feeble churches that asked it, in any part of the field, when application has been properly made, and recommended.

To meet these increased expenses they must look to the churches as the almoners of God's bounty. While the American Board was appealing so loudly, of late, for the \$200,000 of which they stood in need, it was not deemed best to make a special appeal for Home Missions. That, exigency has happily passed away. And now another exigency is upon us. Our own Missions here at home demand a large increase in contributions. To meet the claims of the missionaries the Treasurer has been compelled to procure loans to the amount of eighteen thousand dollars, leaving in addition to this sum an indebtedness to the missionaries of more than ten thousand dollars. Not less than thirty thousand dollars are needed to-day to meet these and other accruing obligations. All this is needed at once, and should be forthcoming.

This state of the Treasury is owing not to any extraordinary deficiency in receipts. The income for the past five months has been in excess of the corresponding months in 1867. The summer months, however, yield much less than the winter months. Consequently the latter must be discounted to help out the former. In the meantime, the work has grown rapidly. Larger contributions are demanded from the friends of Missions. Fifties should be made hundreds, and hundreds thousands. He who gave ten must give twenty dollars. Thank offerings should flow into the treasury for providential mercies. All our pastors and stated supplies should see to it that the annual collection be not delayed; that the people be thoroughly informed as to the greatness of the work, and the pressing need of funds, and secure as large a contribution for the cause as possible. An urgent necessity is on us to extend our operations Southward among the Freedmen; and arrangements are now in progress for earnest and speedy work in this direction, of which the churches will soon be duly informed.

Come, then, to the rescue. Put the Committee in funds. Bid them go forward. One church, that gave last year \$278, gives this year nearly \$1,000. Others are doing nobly. Let every church do its best, and do it speedily.

In behalf of the Committee, EDWIN F. HATFIELD, Chairman and acting Secretary.

AMONG WOMEN'S most indisputable "Rights" must be reckoned that of settling the principles and methods of her own dressing according to the dictates of common sense. The following rehearsal is a movement which is certainly in the right direction and would bear copying in other parts of the world:

A Conference of the women of Germany has been called to meet at Stuttgart on Saturday last. Among the subjects to be discussed is a reform in women's dress by which the vagaries of fashion will be obviated. As a basis for such a reform, the promoters of the Conference have agreed that nothing shall be regarded as old-fashioned which has once been found useful, appropriate, and becoming; that nothing new shall be adopted until it has been proved to be suitable and in good taste; that all garments and all appliances of the toilet that are unwholesome shall be cast aside; and that an inquiry shall be made whether a large saving may not be realized in articles of dress, so that expenses may be brought more into harmony with income.

Self Support Among Eastern Christians.—The Harport (Turkey) Mission has fifty-nine preaching stations, in a district comprising a registered Protestant population of 2910 souls. Of this whole number, 2,834 on an average attend the Sabbath services, leaving only an average of seventy-six persons at home or unrepresented. Our church edifice would be "too strait for us," if any such phenomenon of devotion were to happen in America. Again, the contributions of this oppressed and poverty-stricken people increased last year from 90,000 to 143,000 piastres; almost all giving a tenth of all they got. In the city church, Harport, the Christian (here, the one who does not give his tenth is an exception, and the rule is rapidly growing to a universal one throughout the mission churches. The same principle is beginning to take root among the native Christians in India.