

REV. DR. TALMAGE.

THE EMINENT DIVINE'S SUNDAY DISCOURSE.

Subject: "The Plague of Alcohol"—"The Drunkard's Woe Depicted in Strong Colors—Man's Mission is to Destroy All Good—A Call to Christians."

Text: "And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt."—Exodus xii, 6.

This was the worst of the ten plagues. The destroying angel... his wing over the land, and there was one dead in each house. Lamentation and mourning and woe through all Egypt.

Once upon a time four fiends met in the lost world. They reached the top of our earth were too happy, and three infernals came forth to our earth on embassy of mischief.

The fiend of the vineyard came in one bright morning amid the grapes and sat down on a root of twisted grapevine in sheer discouragement.

Then the second fiend came into the grainfield. He waded chin deep amid the barley and the rye. He heard all the grain talking about bread and prosperous husbandry and thrifty homes.

The fiend of the music entered a grogshop, and there were but few customers. Finding few customers, he swept the roof of the city, and he gathered up the musical instruments and after nightfall he marshaled a band, and the trombones blew and the cymbals clapped and the drums beat and the bugles called and the people crowded in, and they swung around in merry dance, each one with a wineglass in his hand, and the dance became wilder and stronger and rougher, and the room shook and the glasses cracked and the floor broke and the crowd dropped into hell.

Then the four fiends—the fiend of the vineyard and of the grainfield and of the dairy and of the music hall—went back to their home, and they held high carnival because their work had been so well done, and Satan rose from his throne and announced that there was no danger of the earth's redemption so long as these four fiends could pay such tax to the diabolic.

But whether by allegory or by appalling statistic this subject is presented to you as well as it that it is impossible to exaggerate the evils of strong drink. A plague! A plague! In the first place the inebriate suffers from the loss of a good name. God has so arranged it that no man loses his reputation except by his own act.

row." His most confidential friend says: "Why, I'm afraid you are losing your balance with that habit. You are going a little further than you can afford to go. You had better stop." "Oh, no!" he says, "I can stop at any time. I can stop now." He goes on further and further. He cannot stop. He will prove it. He loves himself, and he loves his money, and he loves his drink. He knows he is going down; that he has less self-control, less equanimity of temper, than he used to. Why does he not stop? Because he cannot stop. I will prove it by going still further. He loves his wife and children. He sees that his habits are bringing disgrace upon his home. The probabilities are they will ruin his wife and disgrace his children. But he does this, and he loves them. Why does he not stop? He cannot stop.

Oh, my young friends, I want to tell you that there is a point in inebriation beyond which if man go he cannot stop. Sometimes a man will be more frank than that. A victim of strong drink said to a reformer: "It is impossible for me to stop. I realized that if you should tell me I couldn't have a drink until tomorrow night unless I had all my fingers cut off, I would say, 'Bring on the hatchet and cut them off.'" I had a very dear friend in Philadelphia whose nephew came to him and was talking about his trouble and confessed it. He confessed he could not stop. My friend said, "You must stop." He said, "I can't stop. If there stood a cannon, and it was loaded, and there was a glass of wine in the mouth of the cannon, and I knew you would fire it off if I approached, I would start to get that glass of wine. I must have it. I can't get rid of this habit. I can't get away from it." Oh, it is awful for a man to wake up and feel that he is a captive! I hear him soliloquizing, saying, "I might have stopped three months ago, but I can't stop now. Dead, but not buried; I am a walking corpse. I am an apparition of what I once was. I am a caged immortal and my soul beats against the wires of my cage on this side and beats against the wires of my cage on the other side until there is blood on the wires and blood on the soul, but I can't get out. Destroyed without remedy!"

See the attendants stand back from that ward in the hospital where the inebriates are dying. They cannot stand it. The keepers come through it and say: "Hush up, now! Stop making this noise! Be still! You are disturbing all the other patients. Keep still now!" Then the keepers pass on, and after they get past then the poor creatures wring their hands and say: "O God! Help, help! Give me rum, give me rum! O God! Help! Take the devil off of me! O God! O God!" And they shriek and they blaspheme and they cry for help and then they ask the keepers to stay them, saying, "Stay me, stay me, another me! O God! Help, help! Bu! Give me rum! O God! Help!" They tear out their hair by the handful, and they bite their nails into the quick. This is a fancy picture. It is transpiring in a hospital at this moment. It went on last night while you slept, and more than that, that is the death some of you will die unless you stop. I see it coming. God help you to stop before you go so far that you cannot stop.

But it plagues a man also in the loss of his wife and children, if this habit gets the mastery over him he will do the most outrageous things. If he needs, in order to get strong drink, he would sell them all into slavery for the sake of the rum. There are thousands of homes that have been utterly blasted off. I am speaking of no abstraction. Is there anything so disastrous to a man for his life and for the life of his family as to get drunk? Do you want to be happy when he knows he is breaking his wife's heart and clothing his children with rags? There are little children in the streets to-day, half-starved, unkempt, unclean, want written on every feature of their faded dress and on every wrinkle of their prematurely old countenance, who would have been in the house of God this morning, as well clad as you had it not been that strong drink drove their parents down into penury and then down into the grave. Oh, rum, rum, thou despoiler of homes, thou foe of God, thou recruiting officer of the pit, I hate thee!

But my subject takes a deeper tone when it tells you that the inebriate suffers the loss of the soul. The Bible intimates that if we go into the future world, unforgiven sins and passions which were regretted here will torment us there. I suppose when the inebriate wakes up in the lost world there will be an infinite thirst for strong drink. However poor he was in this world, he could beg or he could steal five cents to get a drink that would for a little while slake his thirst, but in eternity where will the rum come from? Dives wanted one drop of water, but could not get it. Where will the inebriate get the draft he so much requires, so much demanded? No one to brew it. No one to mix it. No one to pour it. No one to fetch it. Millions of worlds now for the drugs that were thrown on the sawdust floor of the restaurant. Millions of worlds now for the rum that hung out from the punch bowl of an earthly banquet. Dives called for water. The inebriate calls for rum.

If a fiend from the lost world should come up on a mission to a grogshop and, having finished his mission in the grogshop, should come back, taking on the tip of his wing one drop of alcoholic beverage, what excitement it would make all through the world of the lost, and if that one drop of alcoholic beverage should drop from the wing of the fiend upon the tongue of the inebriate, how he would spring up and cry: "That's it! That's it! Rum! Rum! That's it!" And all the corners of the lost world would be ringing with the cry: "Give it to me! Rum! Rum!" Ah, my friends, the inebriate's sorrow in the next world will not be the absence of God or holiness or light; it will be the absence of rum. "Look not upon the wine when it is red, when it moveth itself aright in the cup, for at the last it biteth like a serpent, and it stingeth like an adder."

But I must not dwell on generalities; I must come to specifics. Are you astray? If there is any sermon I dislike, it is a sermon on generalities. I want personalities. Are you astray? Have you gone so far you think you cannot get back? Did I say a few moments ago that a man might go to a point in inebriation where he could not stop? Yes, I said it, and I reiterate it. But I want you also to understand that while the man himself, of his own strength, cannot stop, God can stop any man. You have only to lay hold of the strong arm of the Lord God Almighty. He can stop you. Many summers ago I went over to New York one Sabbath evening—our church not yet being open for the autumnal services. I went into a room in the Fourth Ward, New York, where a religious service was being held for reformed drunkards, and I heard a revelation that night that I had never heard before—fifteen or twenty men standing up and giving testimony such as I had never heard given. They not only testified that their hearts had been changed by the grace of God, but that the grace of God had extinguished their thirst. They went on to say that they had reformed at different times before, but immediately fallen, because they were doing the whole work in their own strength. "But as soon as we gave our hearts to God," they said, "and the love of the Lord Jesus Christ has come into our soul the thirst has all gone. We have no more disposition for strong drink."

Oh, if you could only hear intercession with drunkards' bones drumming on the top of the wise cask the "Dead March" of immortal souls, you would go home and kneel down and pray God that rather than your children should ever become the victims of this evil habit you might carry them out to the cemetery and put them down in the last slumber, waiting for the flowers of spring to come over the grave—sweet prophecies of the resurrection. God hath a balm for such a wound, but what flower of comfort ever grew on the blasted death of a drunkard's sepulchre?



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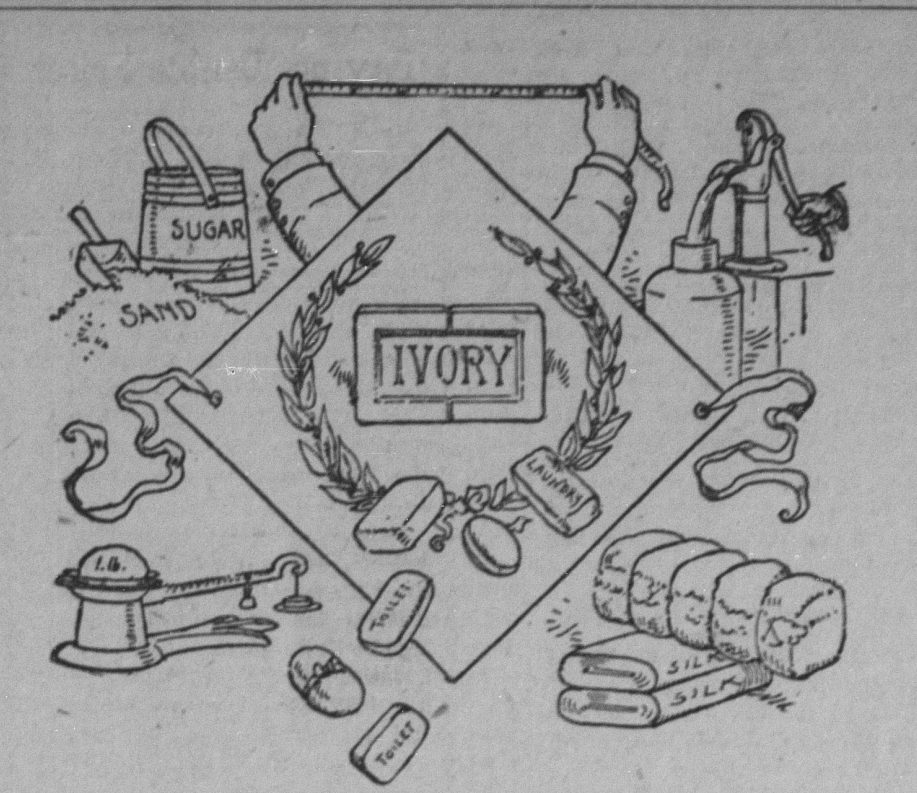
Tobacco in Korea. The Koreans are great smokers, and both sexes and all classes begin smoking early in life and keep it up most diligently. Tobacco is not used by the Koreans in any other form than smoking. The pipe is the constant companion of every Korean man and woman.

Chapel in a Coal Mine. There are many strange places of worship, but one of the most remarkable is doubtless the miners' chapel in Mynydd Menydd Colliery, Swansea, Wales, where for more than fifty years the workers have each morning assembled for worship.

A Trying Ordeal. The working of the Old Age Pension Act in New Zealand is not altogether satisfactory. It is alleged that the really deserving aged poor shrink from the ordeal of the preliminary public examination before a magistrate.

Camphor Trees in Florida. Of a number of camphor trees set out in a public park in Tallahassee, Fla., a few years ago, some are now twelve feet high, the branches spreading until the trees are nearly as wide as high.

Wealth, after all, is a relative thing since he that has little and wants less is richer than he that has much and wants more.



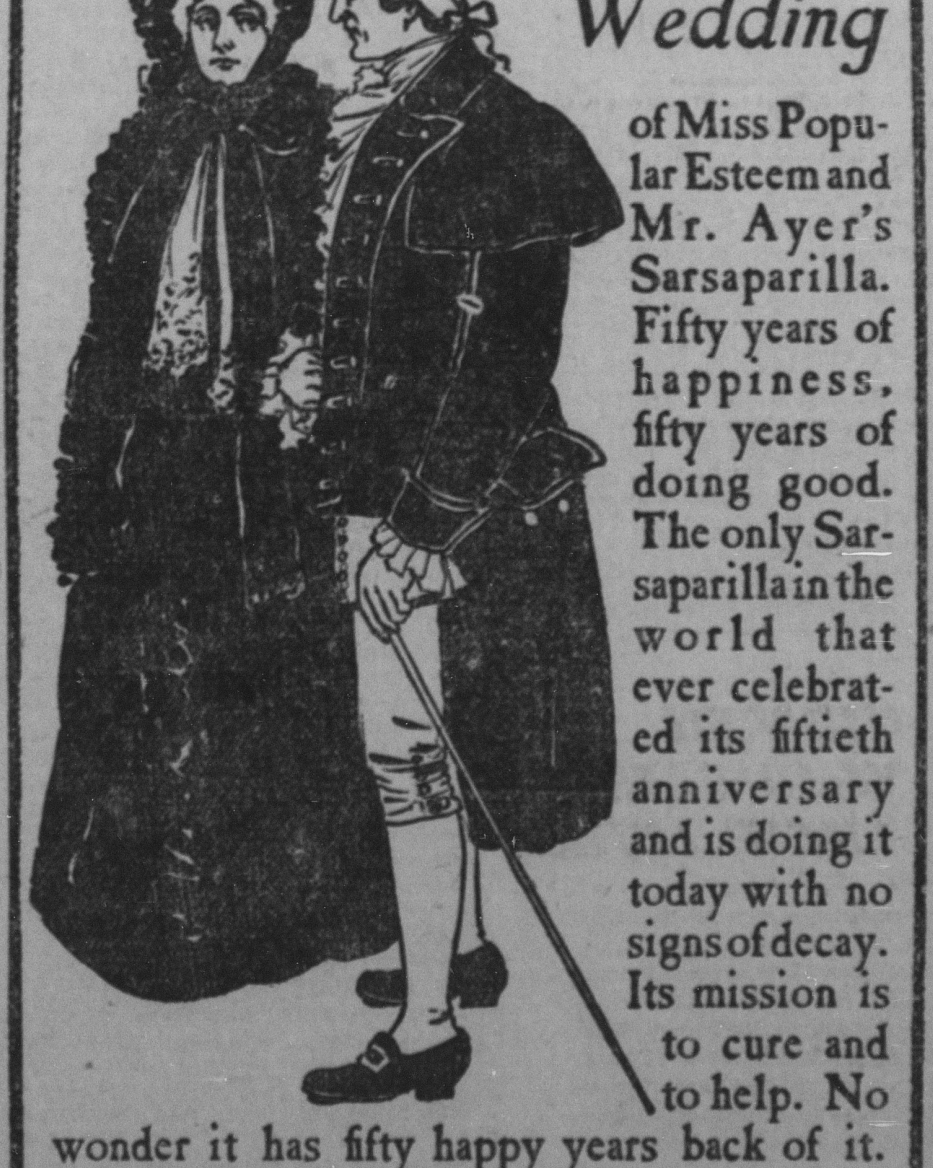
When sand's as good as sugar, and chalk's as good as milk; When thirty inches make a yard, and cotton equals silk; When fourteen ounces make a pound (and that you'll not allow)— Then common soaps may be as good as Ivory Soap is now. IT FLOATS.

Wonders of Minute Animal Life. The following, which might very appropriately bear the heading of "A Wonder of Wonders," is from the pen of Sir Robert S. Ball, F. R. S., astronomer royal of Ireland.

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