REV. DR. TALMAGE.

THE BROOKLYN DIVINE'S SUNDAY SERMON.

Subject: "A Poisoned Dinner."

TEXT: "*So they poured out for the men to eat. And it came to pass, as they were eating of the pottage, that they cried out, and said: O thou man of God, there is death in the pot. And they could not eat thereof.*"—II Kings iv., 40.

Elisha had gone down to lecture to the students in the theological seminary at Gilgal. He found the students very hungry, as students are apt to be. It is very seldom the world makes large provisions for those who give themselves to intellectual toil. In order that these students may be prepared to hear what Elisha says, he first feeds their hunger. He knew very well it is useless to talk, to preach, to lecture with hungry men.

So Elisha, recognizing this common sense principle which every Christian ought to recognize, sends servants out to get food for these hungry students. They pick up some good, healthful herbs, but they happen to pick up also some coloquintida, a bitter poisonous, deathful herb. They bring all these herbs, they put them into the boiling pot, they stir them up, and then a portion of this food is brought to the students and their professors. Seated at the table, one of the hungry students begins immediately to eat, and he happens to get hold of some of the coloquintida. He knew it by the taste. He cries out: "Poison, poison! O thou man of God, there is death in the pot!" Consternation is thrown over the whole group. What a fortunate thing it was that this student so early found the coloquintida in the mixture at the table! You will by reference find this story is precisely as I have mentioned it.

Well, in our day there are great caldrons of sin and death. Coloquintida of mighty temptation is pressed into it. Some dip it out, and taste, and reject it and live. Others dip it out, taste it, keep on and die. And it is the business of every minister of religion, and every man who wishes well to the human race, and who wants to keep the world back from its follies and its sufferings, to cry out: "Beware! poison, poison! Look out for this caldron! Stand back! Beware!"

Sin has done an awful work in our world. It has gone out through all the ages, it has mixed up a great caldron of trouble and suffering and pain, and the whole race is poisoned—poisoned in body, poisoned in mind, poisoned in soul. But blessed be God that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the antidote, and where there was sin there shall be pardon, and where there was suffering there shall be comfort, and where there was death there shall be life.

Some time ago, you will remember, I persuaded you of the importance of being charitable in judgment of others. At the same time I said to you briefly what this morning I wish to say with great emphasis, that while we sympathize with the sinner we must denounce the sin, that while we pity the unfortunate we must be vehement against transgression. Sin is a jagged thing that needs to be roughly handled. You have no right to garland it with fine phrases or lustrous rhetoric. You cannot catch a buffalo with a silken lasso.

A group of emigrants settle in a wild region. The next day a wild beast comes down from the mountain and carries off one of the children. The next day a wild beast comes down from the mountain and carries off another child. Forthwith all the neighbors band together, and they go out with torch in one hand and gun in the other to hunt these monsters down, to find their hiding place, to light up and ransack the caverns, and to destroy the invaders of their houses. So we want now not merely to talk about the sins and follies of the world, we want to go behind them, back of them. Down into the caverns where they hide we need to go with the torch of God's Word in one hand and the sword of God's eternal Spirit in the other to hunt out and slay these iniquities in their hiding places. Or, to come back to the figure suggested by my text, we want to find what are the caldrons of sin and death from which the iniquities of society are dipped out.

I. In the first place, I remark: that unhappy and undisciplined homes are the caldrons of great iniquity.

Parents harsh and cruel on the one hand, or on the other hand loose in their government, wickedly loose in their government, are raising up a generation of vipers. A home where scolding and fretfulness are dominant is blood relation to the gallows and the penitentiary! Petulance is a serpent that crawls up into the family nursery sometimes and crushes everything. Why, there are parents who even make religion disgusting to their children. They scold them for not loving Christ. They have an exasperating way of doing their duty. The house is full of the war whoop of contention, and from such a place husband and sons go out to die.

Oh, is there a Hagar leading away Ishmael into the desert to be smitten of the thirst and parched of the sand? In the solemn birth hour a voice fell to thee from the throne of God, saying: "Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages." At even time, when the angels of God hover over that home, do they hear the children lisping the name of Jesus? O traveler for eternity, your little ones gathered under your robes, are you leading them on the right road, or are you taking them out on the dangerous winding bridle path, off which their inexperienced feet may slip, and up which comes the howling of the wolf and the sound of loosened ledge and tumbling avalanche? Blessed is the family altar at which the children kneel. Blessed is the cradle in which the Christian mother rocks the Christian child. Blessed is the song the little ones sing at nightfall when sleep is closing the eyes and loosening the hand from the toy on the pillow. Blessed is that mother whose every heart-throb is a prayer for her children's welfare.

The world grows old, and the stars will cease to illuminate it, and the waters to refresh it, and the mountains to guard it, and the heavens to overspan it, and its long story of sin and shame and glory and triumph will soon turn to ashes; but influences that started in the early home roll on and roll up through all eternity—blooming in all the joy, waving in all the triumph, exulting in all the song, or shrinking back into all the darkness. Father, mother, which way are you leading your children?

A house took fire and the owner was very careful to get all his furniture out. He got all his books out, and he got all his pictures out, and he got all his valuable papers out, but he forgot to ask, until it was too late: "Are my children safe?" Oh, when the earth shall melt with fervent heat, and the mountains shall blaze, and the seas shall blaze, and the earth shall blaze, will your children be safe? Will your children be safe? Unhappy and undisciplined homes are the source of much of the wretchedness and sin of the world.

I know there are exceptions to it sometimes. From a bright and beautiful Christian home a husband or a son will go out to die. Oh, how long you had that boy in your prayers! He does not know how many sleepless nights you have spent over him. He does not understand how many tears you have shed for his waywardness. Oh, it is hard, after you have toiled for a child, and given him every advantage and every kindness, to have him pay you back in ingratitude! As one Sabbath morning a father came to the foot of the pulpit as I stepped out of it, and said: "O my son, my son, my son!" There is many a young man proud of his mother, who would strike into the dust any man who would insult her, who is at this moment himself, by his evil doing and his bad habits, sharpening a dagger to plunge through that mother's heart. A telegram brought him from afar. He went bloated and scarred into the room and he stood by the lifeless form of his mother.

Her hair gray; it had turned gray in sorrow. Those eyes had wept floods of tears over his wandering. That still white hand had done him many a kindness and had written many a loving invitation and good counsel. He had broken her old heart. He came into the room and threw himself on the casket and he sobbed outright: "Mother, mother!" but those lips that had kissed him in infancy and uttered so many kind words spoke not; they were sealed. Rather than have such a memory come on my soul, I would prefer to have roll over on me the Alps and the Himalayas.

But, while sometimes there are sons who turn out very badly, coming from good homes, I want to tell you for your encouragement it is a great exception. Yet an unhappy and undisciplined home is the poisonous caldron from which a vast multitude drink their death.

II. I remark that another caldron of iniquity is an indolent life. All the rail trains down the Hudson River yesterday, all the rail trains on the Pennsylvania route, all the trains on the Long Island road brought to these cities young men to begin commercial life. Some of them are here this morning, I doubt not. Do you know what one of your great temptations is going to be? It is the example of indolent people in our cities. They are in all our cities. They dress better than some who are industrious. They have access to all places of amusement—plenty of money, and yet idle. They hang around our great hotels—the Fifth Avenue, the Windsor, the Brunswick, the Stuyvesant, the Gilsey House—all our beautiful hotels, you find them around there any day—men who do nothing, never earn anything, yet well dressed, having plenty. Why should I walk? Why should you work? Why drudge and toil in bank and shop and office, or on the scaffolding, or by the anvil, when these men get along so well and do not work?

Some of them hang around the city halls of our great cities, toothpick in their mouth, waiting for some crumb to fall from the office holder's table. Some of them hang around the city hall for the city van bringing criminals from the station houses. They stand there and gloat over it—really enjoy the disgrace and suffering of these poor creatures as they get out of the city van and go into the courts.

Where do they get their money? That is what you ask. That is what I ask. Only four ways of getting money—only four: by inheritance, by earning it, by begging it, by stealing it; and there are a vast multitude among us who get their living not by inheritance, or by earning it, nor by begging it. I do not like to take the responsibility of saying how they get it!

Now, these men are a constant temptation. Why should I toil and wear myself out in the bank, or the office, or the store, or the shop, or the factory? These men have nothing to do. They get along a great deal better. And that is the temptation under which a great many young men fall. They begin to consort with these men, these idlers, and they go down the same awful steeps. The number of men in our cities who are trying to get their living by their wits and by sleight of hand is all the time increasing.

A New York merchant saw a young man, one of his clerks, in half disguise, going into a very low place of amusement. The merchant said to himself: "I must look out for that clerk; he is going in bad company and going in bad places; I must look out for him." A few months passed on, and one morning the merchant entered his store, and this clerk of whom I have been speaking came up in assumed consternation and said: "Oh, sir, the store has been on fire; I have put out the fire, but there are a great many goods lost; we have had a great crowd of people coming and going." Then the merchant took the clerk by the collar and said: "I have had enough of this; you cannot deceive me; where are those goods you stole?" The young man instantly confessed his villainy.

O the numbers of people in these great cities who are trying to get their living not honestly! And they are a mighty temptation to the industrious young man who cannot understand it. While these others have it so easy they have it so hard. Horatius of olden time was told that he could have just as much ground as he could plow around with a yoke of oxen in one day. He hooked up the oxen to the plow and he cut a very large circle and plowed until he came to the same point where he started, and all that property was his. But I have to tell you to-day that just so much financial, just so much moral, just so much spiritual possession you will have as you compass with your own industries, and just so much as from the morning of your life to the evening of your life you can plow around with your own hard work. "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways and be wise." One of the most awful caldrons of death to-day is an indolent life. Thank God that you have to work.

III. Once more I remark: that the dram shop is a great caldron of iniquity in our time. Anacharsis said that the vine bore three grapes: the first was Pleasure, the next was Drunkenness, and the next Misery. Every saloon above ground or under ground is a fountain of iniquity. It may have a license and it may go along quite respectably for a while, but after a while the cover will fall off and the color of the iniquity will be displayed.

"Oh," says some one, "you ought to be easier on such a traffic when it pays such a large revenue to the government, and helps support your schools and your great institutions of mercy." And then I think of what William E. Gladstone said—I think it was the first time he was chancellor of the exchequer—when men engaged in the ruinous traffic came to him and said their business ought to have more consideration from the fact that it paid such a large revenue to the English government, Mr. Gladstone said: "Gentlemen, don't worry yourselves about the revenue; give me thirty millions of sober people, and we'll have revenue enough and a surplus."

We might in this country—this traffic perished—have less revenue, but we would have more happy homes, and we would have more peace, and we would have fewer people in the penitentiary, and there would be tens of thousands of men who are now on the road to hell who would start on the road to heaven.

But the financial ruin is a very small part of it. This iniquity of which I speak takes everything that is sacred out of the family, everything that is holy in religion, everything that is infinite in the soul and tramples it under foot. The marriage day has come. The twain are at the altar. Lights flash. Music sounds. Gay feet go up and down the drawing-room. Did ever a vessel launch on such a bright and beautiful sea? The scene changes. Dingy garret. No fire. On a broken chair a sorrowful wife. Last hope gone. Poor, forsaken, trodden under foot, she knows all the sorrow of being a drunkard's wife. "Oh," she says, "he was the kindest man that ever lived, he was no noble, he was so good! God never made a grander man than he was, but the drink did it, the drink did it!" Some day she will press her hands against her temples and cry: "Oh, my brain, my brain!" or she will go out on the abutment of the bridge some moonlight night and look down on the glassy surface and wonder if under that glassy surface there is not some rest for a broken heart.

A young man, through the intercession of metropolitan friends, gets a place in a bank or store. He is going to leave his country home. That morning they are up early in the old homestead. The trunk is on the wagon. Mother says: "My son, I put a Bible in the trunk, I hope you will read it often." She wipes the tears away with her apron. "Oh," he says, "come, don't you be worried, I know how to take care of myself. Don't be worried about me." The father says: "My son, be a good boy and write home often, your mother will be anxious to hear from you." Crack! goes the whip, and over the hills goes the wagon. Five years have passed on, and a dissipated life has done its work for that young man. There is a hearse coming up in front of the old homestead. The young men of the neighborhood who have stayed on the farm come in and say: "Is it possible? Why, he doesn't look natural, does he? Is that the fair brow we used to know? Is that the healthy cheek we used to know? It can't be possible that is him." The parents stand looking at the gash in the forehead from which the life oozed out, and they lift their hands and say: "Oh, my son, Absalom, my son, my son Absalom; would God that I had died for thee, oh Absalom, my son, my son!"

Lorenzo de Medici was very sick, and some of his superstitious friends thought if they could dissolve a certain number of pearls in a cup and then he would drink them it would cure him of the disease. So they went around and they gathered up all the beautiful pearls they could find, and they dissolved them in a cup, and the sick man drank them. Oh, it was an expensive draught. But I tell you of a more expensive draught than that. Drunkenness puts into its cup the pearl of physical health, the pearl of domestic happiness, the pearl of respectability, the pearl of Christian hope, the pearl of an everlasting heaven, and presses it to the hot lips.

I tell you the dram shop is the gate of hell. The trouble is they do not put up the right kind of a sign. They have a great many different kinds of signs now on places where strong drink is sold. One is called the "restaurant," and another is called the "saloon," and another is called the "hotel," and another is called the "wine cellar," and another is called the "sample room." What a name to give one of these places! A "sample room!" I saw a man on the steps of one of those "sample rooms" the other day, dead drunk. I said to myself: "I suppose that is a sample!" I tell you it is the gate of hell.

"Oh," says some man, "I am kind, I am indulgent to my family, I am right in many respects, I am very generous, and I have too grand and generous a moral nature to be overthrown in that way." Let me say that the persons who are in the most peril have the largest hearts, the best education, the brightest prospects. This sin chooses the fattest lambs for its sacrifice. The brightest garlands are by this carbuncled hand of drunkenness torn off the brow of the poet and the orator. Charles Lamb, answer! Thomas Hood, answer! Sheridan, the English orator, answer! Edgar A. Poe, answer! Junius Brutus Booth, answer!

Oh, come and look over it while I draw off the cover—hang over it and look down into it, and see the seething, boiling, loathsome, smoking, agonizing, blaspheming hell of the drunkard. Young man, be master of your appetites and passions. There are hundreds—might I not say thousands?—of young men in this house this morning—young men of fair prospects. Put your trust in the Lord God and all is well. But you will be tempted. Perhaps you may this moment be addressed on the first Sabbath of your coming to the great city, and I give you this brotherly counsel. I speak not in a perfunctory way. I speak as an older brother talks to a younger brother. I put my hand on your shoulder this day and commend you to Jesus Christ, who himself was a young man and died while yet a young man, and has sympathy for all young men. Oh, be master, by the grace of God, of your appetites and passions!

I close with a peroration. Ministers and speakers are very apt to close with a peroration, and they generally roll up some grand imagery to express what they have to say. I close with a peroration mightier than was ever uttered by mere human lips. Two quotations. The first is this: "Who hath woe? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? They that tarry long at the wine, they that go to seek mixed wine. 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 stingeth like an adder." This is the other quotation. Make up your mind as to which is the more impressive. I think the last is the mightier: "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk thou in the sight of thine own eyes; but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."

A GENTLEMAN living near Baxley, Ga., recently dreamed that in a certain hole under a stump of a tree he would find a fur collar which had been stolen from his house. He visited the field, found the stump, and placing his hand in the hole felt a furry substance, pulled it out, and dropped the skunk on short notice, and has since been fumigating the clothes he wore on that occasion. He found the collar, or, at least, the material for one.

THERE has expired at Rye, England, an old sailor named James Bayley, who was known to have saved no fewer than twenty-six lives, frequently at the imminent risk of his own. On one occasion he kept three men afloat in Sunderland harbor until they were rescued, and he twice saved the occupants of Deal boats which had capsized off the South Foreland.

WHEN coal was first introduced in London an outcry was raised against burning it, on account of the smoke. A law was passed prohibiting its use for fuel, which, being disregarded, the law was strengthened by making the burning of coal a capital offense. It is recorded that one man was executed for transgressing the law.

A NEW YORK physician who attends numerous charity patients in the southeastern section of that city, says the standard of morality is higher among the Central European Hebrews of that region than among any of their neighbors of different race and creed. The Jews, too, cut loose quickly from charitable assistance.

SIR THOMAS GLADSTONE left an estate of 46,000 acres in Kincardineshire, which passes in fee-simple to his son Sir John, who is an uncompromising Tory. The estate is a magnificent wooded country, and is overlooked by Fasque House, one of the finest mansions in Scotland.

NEW YORK CITY has lately borrowed $9,000,000 at 2½ per cent. interest, the lowest rate on record. The loan runs forty years, and is exempt from taxation. About one-third of the amount commanded a premium.

CHRISTIAN HOLZWORTH of Lowville, N. Y., who is hopelessly insane, has received a back pay pension of $13,000 and will hereafter be paid $75 a month. His wife has supported herself and children by taking in washing.

A CURIOUS result of being hit with a base-ball is reported from Philadelphia. A stuttering man was struck in the mouth and when he got well the impediment in his speech had disappeared.

"CONVERSATION warms the mind," said Benjamin Franklin. That won't do for children, however. The slipper or boot-jack beats conversation all hollow.

SABBATH SCHOOL.

INTERNATIONAL LESSON FOR MAY 19.

Lesson Text: "The Lord's Supper," Mark xiv., 12-26—Golden Text: Luke xxii., 19—Commentary.

12. "The first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover." The last day on earth in a mortal body had come; this night He would keep the passover with His disciples, and on the morrow be crucified—Christ our passover sacrificed for us (I Cor. v., 7)—and He went forward calmly, unwaveringly, knowing every step of the way beforehand. It was over fourteen hundred years since the first passover was kept that night in Egypt, when by the blood of a lamb the first born of Israel were saved from death and the nation brought forth from their bondage by the outstretched arm of Jehovah, and now the Lamb of God to whom every sacrifice from the beginning pointed is about to be slain, whose blood saves from eternal death all to whom it is applied, and who shall yet accomplish for Israel a greater deliverance than that from Egypt. We cannot think of His omitting a single passover feast since first He went up to Jerusalem with Joseph and Mary at the age of 12, when He uttered His first recorded words: "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Faithfully did He keep to that business, not seeking His own will or glory, but in all things pleasing the Father, and soon we shall hear Him say to His Father: "I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do." As we go forward finishing the work which He gives us to do, let us cheerfully and persistently renounce our own will in all things and keep saying to Him: "Lord, where wilt Thou, what wilt Thou?"

13. "He sendeth forth two of His disciples." Just as when He wanted the ass's colt (chap. xi., 1), but this time we know whom He sent, for Lu. xxii., 8, says it was Peter and John; He may have sent the same two on the previous occasion, but we are not told. He sendeth whom He will, and where He will, and every disciple is expected to be ready and promptly obey, willing to be sent anywhere, and just as willing to be passed by and see another sent; the last is sometimes the hardest.

"Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water; follow him." All things are naked and open to His eyes. He is acquainted with all our words and ways; it would help us to remember this.

14. "The Master saith, where is the guest chamber where I shall eat the passover with My disciples?" What a privilege to prepare a room for Jesus and welcome Him and His disciples to it; what a privilege to let Him have the use of anything that we have, but how slow we are to see it.

15. "He will show you a large upper room furnished and prepared; there make ready for us." This indicates the man's cheerful and willing service; he did not do as little as he could; he did not say, Well, if I give the use of a room that is all He can expect of me, but, like Mary, in the previous lesson, he did all that he could, he gave a furnished and prepared room. Jesus gave Himself, His all, for us; unless we cheerfully place all we are and have at His service it is a proof that we do not know or appreciate His love to us.

16. "His disciples went forth and came into the city, and found as He had said unto them; and they made ready the passover." When we obey Him we will always find it just as He says; there is nothing so safe and sure and glorious as believing and obeying God. If we are willing and obedient we shall eat the good of the land (Isa. i., 19). He has prepared for us a passover and invites us to come under the shelter of His blood and constantly partake of Himself, saying unto us: "He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me." (John vi., 57). We in return may prepare and offer unto Him continually the sacrifice of praise and good works, with which He will be well pleased. (Heb. xiii., 15, 16).

17. "And in the evening He cometh with the twelve." One of them had in his heart the spirit of murder, for he had been to the chief priests and agreed with them for a sum of money to betray Him unto them (vs. 10, 11); yet he continues with the twelve as one of them, not thinking that the searcher of hearts saw his every step and knew his every word and act. How many are like him today and yet continue among the number of the professed followers of Jesus!

18. "And as they sat and did eat, Jesus said: Verily I say unto you, one of you which eateth with Me shall betray Me." If you would have complete record, read between the last verse and this one Luke xxii., 15-18; John xiii., 1-17, and prayerfully ponder the things written there concerning the kingdom of God and the present need of cleanness, humility and loving ministry to others.

19. "They began to be sorrowful, and to say unto Him, one by one, Is it I?" Luke and John tell us that they began to inquire among themselves, doubting of whom He spake. What a testimony to the devilish skill of Judas that he could be for three years a thief and hypocrite, and these eleven not find it out and perhaps not suspect it; on the other hand what a glorious testimony to the long suffering and wondrous love of Jesus that He bore so patiently with this wicked one and never in any way indicated to the others what he was.

20. "He answered and said unto them: It is one of the twelve that dippeth with Me in the dish." If all dipped in the same dish this would be like saying, it is one who can eat with Me and yet kill Me, which would be the breaking of the most solemn vow of friendship and fidelity. Matthew says, "he that dippeth his hand with me in the dish," which might imply that Judas was sitting or reclining near to Jesus; he also tells us that Judas then said: "Master, is it I?" to which Jesus replied: "Thou hast said," thus finally pointing him out before them all, for the time had come, as it will surely come, sooner or later, to all like him. For further light on this particular moment at the feast read John xiii., 24-30.

21. "Good were it for that man if he had never been born." Then, plainly, it is better never to be born than to profess to belong to Christ and be a hypocrite. It will be more tolerable for the ungodly than for professing Christians who are not real Christians; it will also be more tolerable for those who never heard of Christ than for those who have heard of Him and rejected Him.

22. "And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them and said: Take, eat; this is My body." We conclude from John xiii., 30, that Judas had at this time gone out, and now that the passover sacrifice was about to receive its grand fulfillment (the future fulfillment in the kingdom will be as to results), Jesus institutes a new ordinance, which is to be observed by His followers till He comes again (I Cor. xi., 26). It is gloriously simple; it is grandly solemn. He takes bread, He gives thanks, He breaks the bread and as He gives it to them, bidding them to eat it, He says: "This is My body which is given for you, this do in remembrance of Me." (Luke xxii., 19.)

23, 24. "And He took the cup, * * * and He said unto them: This is My blood of the new testament which is shed for many." After all had eaten of the bread then He passed to each the wine, bidding them drink of it, and telling them that it was His blood shed for the remission of sins.

25. "Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God." Just as the passover points us forward to the kingdom for the manifestation of all its blessings so does this sacrament point us forward to the same kingdom, and by it we constantly show forth the Lord's death till He come. Before Christ came to suffer, His death on Calvary, His atoning sacrifice, was the event of supreme importance and interest to heaven and earth; now that He has died, the next supreme event will be His coming again in power and glory to establish His kingdom. Till then let every Christian be a herald proclaiming salvation through the Blood of the Lamb and thus hasten the kingdom of God. —*Lesson Helper.*

THE FRIEND'S ADVICE.

"Don't give up, my poor, sick friend,
While there's life there's hope, 'tis said;
Sicker persons often mend;
Time to give up when you're dead."

"Purer, richer blood you need:
Strength and tone your system give;
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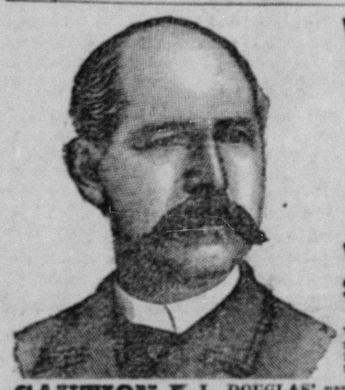

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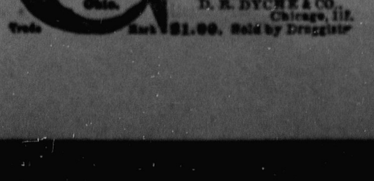

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