THE CURSE OF DRINK.

Intemperance a Vice That Has Cursed All Ages and Climes,

RUINING THE BRIGHTEST MINDS.

The Folly of Trying to Stop the Evil by Heavy Taxation.

WARFARE AGAINST THE RUM POWER

[SPECIAL TELEGRAM TO THE DISPATCH.]

BROOKLYN, July 27.—Dr. Talmage's sermon to-day is devoted to the curse of intemperance. With the hand of a master he draws in vivid colors the appalling tragedies which this remorseless demon has perpetrated. His text is Genesis xxxvii. 33: "It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him."

Joseph's brethren dipped their brother's coat in goat's blood, and then brought the dabbled garment to their father, cheating him with the idea that a ferocious animal had slain him, and thus hiding their infamous behavior. But there is no deception about that which we hold up to your observation to-day. A monster such as never ranged African thicket or Hindoostan jungle hath tracked this land, and with bloody maw hath strewn the continent with the mangled carcasses of whole generations; and there are tens of thousands of fathers and mothers who could hold up the garment of their slain boy, truthfully exclaiming: "It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him." There has, in all ages and climes, been a tendency to the improper use of stimulants. Noah, as if disgusted with the prevalence of water in his time, took to strong drink. By this vice Alexander the Conqueror was conquered. The Romans in their feasts fell off their seats with intoxication. Four hundred millions of our race are opium eaters. India, Turkey and China have groaned with the desolation; and by it have been quenched such lights as Halley and De Quincey.

One hundred millions are the victims of the betelnut, which has specially blasted the East Indies. Three hundred millions chew hashish, and Persia, Brazil and Africa suffer the deities. The Tartars employ murowa; the Mexicans, the agave; the people at Guarapo, an intoxicating quality taken from sugar-cane, while a great multitude, that no man can number, are the disciples of alcohol. To it they bow. Under it they are trampled. In its trenches they fall. On its ghastly holocaust they burn. Could the muster roll of this great army be called, and they could come up from the dead, what eyes, what cheeks, what lips, what festering putrefaction and beastliness? What heart could endure the groan of agony?

WHAT INTEMPERANCE DOES.

Drunkenness: Does it not jingle the burglar's key? Does it not whet the assassin's knife? Does it not cock the highwayman's pistol? Does it not wave the incendiary's torch? Has it not sent the physician reeling into the sick room; and the minister with his tongue thick into the pulpit? Did not an exquisite poet, from the very top of his fame, fall a gibbering idiot, into the gutter, on his way to be married to one of the fairest daughters of New England, and at the very hour the bride was decking herself for the altar; and did he not die of delirium tremens, almost unattended, in a hospital? Tamerlane asked for 160,000 skulls with which to build a pyramid to his own honor. He got the skulls, and built the pyramid. But if the bones of all those who have fallen as a prey to dissipation could be piled up, it would make a vaster pyramid.

Who will gird himself for the journey, and try with me to scale this mountain of the dead—going up miles high on human carcasses to find still other peaks far above, mountain above mountain white with the bleached bones of drunkards?

The Sabbath has been sacrificed to the rum traffic. To many of our people, the best day of the week is the worst. Bakers must keep their shops closed on the Sabbath. It is dangerous to have loaves of bread going out on Sunday. The shoestore is closed: severe penalty will attack the man who sells boots on the Sabbath. But down with the window shutters of the grogshops! Our laws shall confer particular honor upon the rum traffickers. All other trades must stand aside for these. Let our citizens who have disagreed themselves by trading in clothing and hosiery and hardware and lumber and coal take off their hats to the rum seller, elected to particular honor. It is unsafe for any other class of men to be allowed license for Sunday work. Go your ways, O ye traffickers in the peace of families, and in the souls of immortal men! Let the corks fly and the beer foam and the rum go tearing down the half-consumed throat of the victim. God does not see! Does He? Judgment will never come! Will it?

FOLLY OF TAXING THE TRAFFIC.

I do not know but that God is determined to let drunkenness triumph, and the husbands and sons of thousands of our best families be destroyed by this vice, in order that our people, amazed and indignant, may rise up and demand the extermination of this municipal crime. There is a way of driving down the hoops of a barrel so tight that they break. We have, in this country, at various times tried to regulate this evil by a tax on whisky. You might as well try to regulate the Asiatic cholera or the smallpox by taxation. The men who distill liquors are, for the most part, unscrupulous, and the higher the tax the more inducement to illicit distillation.

Oh! the folly of trying to restrain an evil by government tariff! If every gallon of whisky made—if every flask of wine produced, should be taxed a thousand dollars, it would not be enough to pay for the woe that would stand the eyes of widows and orphans, nor for the blood it has dashed on the Christian Church, nor for the catastrophe of the millions it has destroyed forever.

This foul thing gives one swing to its scythe, and our best merchants fall; their stores are sold and they sink into dishonored graves. Again it swings its scythe, and some of our best physicians fall into sufferings that their wisest prescriptions cannot cure. Again it swings its scythe, and ministers of the gospel fall from the heights of Zion, with long, resounding crash of ruin and shame. Some of your own households have already been shaken. Perhaps you can hardly admit it; but where was your son last night? Where was he Friday night? Where will he be Thursday night? Wednesday night? Tuesday night? Monday night? Nay, have not some of you in your own bodies felt the power of this habit? You think that you could stop? Are you sure you could? Go on a little farther, and I am sure you cannot. I think if some of you should try to break away you would find a chain on the right wrist and one on the left, one on the right foot and another on the left. This serpent does not begin to hurt until it has wound round and round. Then it begins to tighten and strangle and crush until the bones crack and the blood trickles and the eyes start from their sockets, and the mangled wretch cries, "O God! O God! help! help!" But it is too late; and not even the fires of woe can melt the chain when once it is fully fastened.

WARN THE CHILDREN.

I have shown you the evil beast. The question is, Who will hunt him down, and how shall we shoot him? I answer, First, by getting our children right on this subject. Let them grow up with an utter aversion to strong drink. Take care how you administer it even as medicine. If you find that they have a natural love for it, as some have, put the glass of it some horrid stuff, and make it utterly nauseous. Teach them, as faithfully as you do the Bible, that rum is a fiend. Take them to the almshouse, and show them the wreck and ruin it works. Walk with them into the homes that have been scourged by it. If a drunkard hath fallen into a ditch, take your children up where they can see his face, bruised, savage, and swollen, and say, "Look, my son. Rum did that!" Looking out of your window at some one who, intoxicated to madness, goes through the street, brandishing his fist, blasphoming God, a howling, cursing, shouting, reeling, raving and foaming maniac, say to your son, "Look; that man was once a child like you."

As you go by the grogshop, let them know that that is the place where men are slain, and their wives made paupers, and their children slaves. Hold out to your children all warnings, all rewards, all counsels, lest in after days they break your heart and curse your gray hairs. A man laughed at my father for his scrupulous temperance principles, and said: "I am more liberal than you. I always give my children the sugar in the glass after we have been taking a drink." Three of his sons have died drunkards, and the fourth is imbecile through intemperate habits.

Again: We will battle this evil by voting only for sober men. How many men are there who can rise above the feelings of partisanship, and demand that our officials shall be sober men?

I maintain that the question of sobriety is higher than the question of availability; and that, however eminent a man's services may be, if he have habits of intoxication, he is unfit for any office in the gift of a Christian people. Our laws will be no better than the men who make them. Spend a few days at Harrisburg, or Albany, or Washington, and you will find out why, upon these subjects, it is impossible to get righteous enactments.

TEMPERANCE ORGANIZATIONS.

Again: We will war upon this evil by organized societies. The friends of the rum traffic have banded together; annually issue their circulars; raise fabulous sums of money to advance their interests; and by grips, passwords, signs and stratagems, set at defiance public morals. Let us confront them with organizations just as secret, and, if need be, with grips and passwords, and signs, maintain our position. There is no need that our philanthropic societies tell all their plans. I am for war of all lawful strategy in the carrying on of this conflict. I wish to God we could lay under the wine casks a train which, once ignited, would shake the earth with the explosion of this monstrous iniquity!

Again: We will try the power of the pledge. There are thousands of men who have been saved by putting their names to such a document. I know it is laughed at; but there are some men who, having once promised a thing, do it. "Some have broken the pledge." Yes; they were liars. But all men are not liars. I do not say that it is the duty of all persons to make such signature, but I do say that it would be the salvation of many of you. The glorious work of Theobald Mathew can never be estimated. At his hand four millions of people took the pledge, and multitudes in Ireland, England, Scotland and America have kept it till this day. The pledge signed to thousands has been the proclamation of emancipation.

Again: We expect great things from inebriate asylums. They have already done a glorious work. I think we are coming at last to treat inebriation as it ought to be treated, namely, as an awful disease, self-inflicted, to be sure, but nevertheless a disease. Once fastened upon a man, sermons won't cure him; temperance lectures will not eradicate it; religious tracts will not remove it; the gospel of Christ will not arrest it. Once under the power of this awful thirst, the man is bound to go on; and, if the foaming glass were on the other side of perdition, he would wade through the fires of hell to get it. A young man in prison had such a strong thirst for intoxicating liquors that he cut off his hand at the wrist, called for a bowl of brandy in order to stop the bleeding, thrust his wrist into the bowl, and then drank the contents.

THE DEMON OF DRINK.

Stand not, when the thirst is on him, between a man and his cups. Clear the track for him. Away with the children; he would tread their life out. Away with the wife; he would dash her to death. Away with the cross; he would run it down. Away with the Bible; he would tear it up for the winds. Away with heaven; he considers it worthless as a straw. "Give me the drink? Give it to me! Though the hands of blood pass up the bowl, and the soul trembles over the pit—the drink! give it to me! Though it be pale with ghastliness; though the froth of everlasting anguish float on the foam—give it to me! I drink to my wife's woe, to my children's rags; to my eternal banishment from God, and hope, and heaven! Give it to me! the drink!"

Again: We will contend against these evils by trying to persuade the respectable classes of society to the banishment of alcoholic beverages. You who move in the refined and fashionable circles you who drink the best liquors; you who never drink until you lose your balance, let us look each other in the face on this subject. You have, under God, in your power the redemption of this land from drunkenness. Empty your cellars and wine closets of the beverage, and then come out and give us your hand, your vote, your prayers, your sympathies.

But there are some who say, "Let us alone. Do that, and I will promise three things: First, That you will give us temporal happiness in having done your duty. Secondly, you will probably save somebody—perhaps your own child. Thirdly, you will not, in your last hour, have a regret that you made the sacrifice, if sacrifice it be.

As long as you make drinking respectable, drinking customs will prevail, and the plowshare of death, drawn by terrible disasters, will go on turning up this whole continent, from end to end, with the long, deep, awful furrow of drunkards' graves.

Oh! how this rum fiend would like to go and hang up a skeleton in your beautiful house, so that, when you opened the front door to go in, you would see it in the hall; and, when you sat at your table you would see it hanging from the wall; and, when you opened your bedroom, you would find it stretched upon your pillow; and, waking at night, you would feel its cold hand passing over your face and pinching at your heart.

AN INSIDIOUS FOE.

There is no home so beautiful but it may be devastated by the awful curse. It throws its jargon into the sweetest harmony. What was it that silenced Sheridan, the English orator, and shattered the golden scepter with which he swayed parliaments and courts? What fool sprite turned the sweet rhythm of Robert Burns into a tuneless babble? What brought down the majestic form of one who awed the American Senate with his eloquence, and after a while carried him home dead drunk? What was it that swamped the noble spirit of one of the heroes of the last war, and left him, a drunken fool, reeled from the deck of a Western steamer, and was drowned? There was one whose voice we all loved to hear. He was one of the most classic orators of the century. People wondered where a man of so pure a heart and so excellent a life should have such a sad countenance always. They knew not that his wife was a sot.

I call upon those who are guilty of these indulgences to quit the path of death. Oh! what a chance it would make in your home! Do you see how everything there is being desolated? Would you not like to bring back joy to your wife's heart, and have your children come out to meet you with the sweet confidence as once they showed? Would you not like to rekindle the home-lights that long ago were extinguished? It is not too late to change. It may be moving out of a place in which it will be memory but weak tears and a ruined reputation, nor smooth out from your anxious brow the wrinkles which trouble has plowed. It may not call back unkind words uttered, or rough deeds done; for perhaps in those awful moments you struck her! It may not take from your memory the bitter thoughts connected with some little grave. But it is not too late to save yourself and secure for God and your family the remainder of your fast-going life.

But perhaps you have not utterly gone astray. I may address one who may not have quite made up his mind. Let your better nature speak out. You take one side or the other in the war against drunkenness. Have you the courage to put your foot down right, and say to your companions and friends, "I will never drink intoxicating liquor in all my life; nor will I countenance the habit in others?" Have nothing to do with strong drink. It has turned the earth into a place of skulls, and has stood