

## A PERILOUS POSITION.

**H**OSE who work among the oil wells are often exposed to dangers. One of these oilmen, whose hair turned white during a night of terror, related his experience to a correspondent of the Philadelphia Times. He said there had been a heavy storm one night at about midnight, and, as usual with the oil country residents, he arose and looked from the window to see if any tanks had been struck by lightning. A bright glare in the sky convinced him that a large tank of oil was on fire a few miles distant, and he went back to sleep, determined to go to the fire at noon and see the first overthrow.

You know that when a twenty-five thousand barrel iron tank of oil has been on fire for twelve or fourteen hours, the burning oil will boil up and flow over the sides just like a kettle of soap. At two o'clock the first grand overflow occurred. As I stood on the hillside, I heard a man shout, "She's coming," and I saw pipe-line men running away from the tank for their lives. I heard a rumbling sound inside the tank and didn't know what it meant, but a few seconds after I saw fully five hundred barrels of burning oil shoot up from the tank and boil over the sides. It was grand beyond description, and I stood and watched it in silence. The burning oil floated down a creek for a mile, burning a saw mill, numerous oil wells and tanks, buildings and everything within reach of its devastating breath. When the flow had partly subsided, it was found that a second twenty-five thousand barrel iron tank had been set on fire by the overflow of burning oil. I ventured down behind the burning tanks to get a better view from the lower side. While trying to avoid a pool of burning oil, I fell into a mud-hole or sort of quicksand, and stuck fast. My utmost endeavours were of no avail in extricating myself from the hole. I yelled at the top of my voice, but so great was the roar of the burning tanks that my voice sounded weak and far away. I struggled until exhausted, and then lay back and rested. How beautiful the great pillar of black seemed in the clear blue sky! Great billows of smoke would go surging upward hundreds of feet, and float away into space, their sombre hues turned to snowy whiteness. I thought the boys would miss me and search for me. Suddenly I heard the sound of a cannon, and saw a column of flame and smoke shoot up from one of the tanks, the truth came upon me like a bolt of lightning, and I was stricken senseless by the thought. The United Pipe Line men were firing cannon balls through the first tank to draw off the oil and prevent a second overflow.

What a conviction came upon me! It was a matter of seconds. I tried to shout, but the words would not come. With the strength of despair I struggled to get free. The quicksand held me with the grip of death. All at once I saw a little stream of burning oil running slowly down toward me. My time had come, I thought, and I must be burned to death by inches. The earth was dear to me then—dearer than ever before—and I turned to get a look at the sunlight and the bright world once more.

The stream of burning oil, now grown larger, was almost upon me. The earth and all things earthly faded away, and all was dark.

When I came back to consciousness I was lying in my own room with my friends around me. The boys said that in following the supposed course of the overflowed oil they came upon me and rescued me just as the burning stream was about to dash upon me. I was sick a long while, and when I got well I found my hair as white as you see it now.

## THE EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL.



**W**AS able to convey a considerable amount of conviction to an intelligent scholar a little time ago by a simply experiment. I was in his house, and he was extolling wine and singing its praises. He sang:

"Life is checkered o'er with woe,  
Bid the ruddy bumper flow;  
Wine's the soul of man below."

He sang that to me every morning, in order, as he said, to rouse my flagging spirits. I said: "You sing that song well. Why not begin with wine at breakfast and give it to your servants?" "My dear friend," he said, "I couldn't get through the day; I should be as seedy as possible. I couldn't; and as for my servants, if I gave it to them I don't know what would happen." "Then when do you take it?" I asked. "When the cares of the day are over, then's the time for a few glasses of wine and a nightcap." "Will you," I said, "be good enough to feel my pulse as I stand here?" He did. "Count it carefully. What does it say?" "Your pulse says 74." I then sat down in a chair. "Will you count it now?" "Your pulse has gone down. Your pulse is now 70." I then laid myself down on the couch and said: "Will you take it again? What is it?" "It is 64. What an extraordinary thing!" "What is the effect of position on the pulse? When you lie down at night that is the way nature gives your heart rest. You know nothing about it, but that beating organ is resting to that extent, and if you reckon it up it is a great deal of rest, because in lying down my heart is doing ten strokes less per minute. Multiply that by 60 and it is 600. Multiply it by eight hours, and within a fraction it is 5,000 strokes different, and as my heart is throwing up six ounces of blood at every stroke it makes a difference of 30,000 ounces of lifting during a night." "That is a curious fact; but what has it to do with me?" "When I lie down at night without the alcohol that is the rest my heart gets, but when you take your wine or grog you do not allow that rest, for the influence of alcohol is to increase the number of strokes, and instead of getting this rest you put on something like 15,000 extra strokes, and the result is you rise up very seedy, as you yourself have said, with the result of a restless night, and unfit the next day for work until you have taken a little of the wine which fills the ruddy bumper, and which you say is the soul of man below." His wife said: "That is perfectly true. The night is attended with a degree

of unrest and broken sleep which I can hardly describe, and which gives me very much anxiety." That had an influence. He began to reckon up those figures and think what it meant lifting up an ounce so many thousand times, and in the result he became a total abstainer, with every benefit to his health, and, as he admits, to his happiness. I would like those who speak of alcohol as something to be taken at night to give a night's sleep and rest and comfort just to take the opposite side of the question into consideration, and see how these two positions fit in together.—*Dr. B. W. Richardson.*

## PERSEVERE.

**S**UNDAY School teachers and workers in our juvenile societies need constantly to be reminded that if they would succeed in their work they must not be wanting in patience and perseverance. Mr. Spurgeon makes the following excellent remarks on this matter, which we would do well to remember when discouraged or tired:

"In dibbling beans the old practice was to put three in each hole—one for the worm, one for the crow, and one to live and produce the crop. In teaching children we must give line upon line, precept upon precept, repeating the truth which we would inculcate, till it becomes impossible for the child to forget it. We may well give the lesson once, expecting the child's frail memory to lose it; twice, reckoning that the devil, like an ill-bred, will steal it; thrice, hoping that it will take root downwards and bring forth fruit to the glory of God."

## A CRITICAL MOMENT.

**I** WAS talking a few weeks ago with a clergyman at the West who said that he returned to his father's house in Boston, and his brother, a son in the family, came in intoxicated, and he said when the intoxicated son had retired: "Mother, how do you stand this?" "Oh!" she replied, "I have stood this a good while, but it don't worry me now. I found it was worrying me to death, and I put the whole case in God's hands, and I said: 'O God! I cannot endure this any longer; take care of my son, reform him, bless him, save him,' and there I left the whole thing with God, and I shall never worry again." "The next day" said the clergyman who was talking to me in regard to it, "I met my brother, and I said: 'John, you are in an awful position.' 'How so?' said he. 'Why, mother told me that she has left you with God; she doesn't pray for you any more.' 'Is that so? Well, I cannot contend with the Lord; I shall never drink again.'"

He never did drink again. He went to the Far west, and at a banquet in St. Louis given to him, a lawyer just come to the city, there were many guests, and there was much wine poured, and they insisted that this reformed lawyer should take his glass of wine, and they insisted until it became a great embarrassment, they said to him: "Ah! you don't seem to have any regard for us, and you have no sympathy with our hilarities."

Then the man lifted the glass

and said: "Gentlemen, there was in Boston some years ago a man who, though he had a beautiful wife and two children, fell away from his integrity and went down into the ditch of drunkenness. He was reformed by the grace of God and the prayers of his mother, and he stands before you to-night. I am the man. If I drink this glass I shall go back to my old habit and perish; I am not strong enough to endure it. Shall I drink it? If you say so I will."

A man sitting next lifted a knife and with one stroke broke off the bottom of the glass, and all the men at the table shouted: "Don't drink! don't drink!"

Oh! that man was a hero. He had been going through a battle year after year; that was a great crisis. What a struggle! I tell you this incident because I want you to know that there are a great many men in peril, and when you are hard in your criticisms about men's inconsistencies you do not know what a battle they have to fight; a battle compared with which Austerlitz and Gettysburg and Waterloo were child's play.—*Rev. T. DeWitt Talmage.*

## THE LEPER'S WIFE.

In the middle ages the awful disease of leprosy, now almost unknown in temperate climes, was fearfully frequent, and persons afflicted with it were set apart by a solemn religious service resembling that used at the burial of the dead. After this the unhappy leper wandered forth living on food and clothing given by the charitable, and articles thus bestowed were flared on the ground as even to touch them with a finger tip subjected them to the "leper taint."

It is related by historians of the period that instances were not uncommon for the wives of lepers to voluntarily assume the leper's taint and lovingly share the dreadful fate they could not avert.

**T**HE leper stood apart from all,  
Save the vested priest, and the  
funeral pall  
Was over him thrown, and the prayer  
was said  
And the requiem chanted as if for the  
dead,  
When sudden a low, a stifled sound,  
'Twas scarcely a sob, yet so profound  
Was the stillness of all who gazing stood,  
That it smote on his heart and curdled  
his blood,  
Then fainter he stamped on the marble  
stone  
And signed with his arm and bade her  
begone;  
But as her eye through its struggling  
tears  
Caught the anguished glance of her lover  
of years,  
She unclasped her hands with a cry and  
forgot  
All, all, save him with the leper spot.  
Ere the astonished priest could shout For-  
bear.  
Or the shuddering gazers gasp a prayer,  
Her circling arms his waist had pressed,  
Her burning cheek was on his breast.  
Her doom is sealed! He has kissed her  
brow,  
The "leper's taint" is on her now;  
She knew it, but her eye was bright,  
And her heart was glad and her step was  
light,  
And the accursed went not forth alone,  
For woman's love as a halo shone  
About his path and lighted the gloom  
Which hung o'er his lone and fearful  
doom.

Beware the bowl! though rich and bright,  
Its rubies flash upon the sight,  
An adder coils its depths beneath,  
Whose lure is woe, whose sting is death.  
—*Alfred B. Street.*