

In the Dominion the strongest of arguments to support his project for an inter-oceanic ship railway on the Isthmus of Tehuantepec.—*New York Times.*

## DRINK.

WHISKEY *alias* POISON.

**D**RINK! poison! who would think  
Any man of sense would drink!  
Who would think it could be true?  
Yet we know that thousands do.

Thousands of millions we might say  
Drink this poison every day!  
In the round the grog-shops sink  
Every day to get their drink.

Lounging 'round the whiskey shop,  
Waiting for the burning drop,  
Ever ready for the wink  
To go up and have a drink.

Though their wives and children need  
All their time to earn them bread,  
That is naught, they seem to think,  
In comparison with drink.

Self-respect and honour fled,  
Every noble passion dead,  
Character as black as ink,  
Craving still the poison drink.

Then they madly onward go  
Toward the gulf of endless woe,  
Trotting over ruin's brink,  
Brought there by the poison drink.

Following thus the fatal chain,  
Soon its terminus they gain;  
Step by step and link by link,  
Till the last is reached by drink.

Honour, home, and health are gone,  
Nothing now to rest upon,  
Down they must forever sink—  
All is lost—and that by drink.

—*Rev. James Lawson.*

## ONLY A BOY.

BY MARY AUGUSTA THURSTON.

"WELL, Mark, my boy, how are you to-day?" said a gentleman, placing his hand upon the shoulder of a boy whose "thinking cap" must have covered his ears, for he started when he heard himself addressed and said.

"I beg your pardon, sir; did you speak to me?"

"I merely inquired concerning your health," answered the gentleman. "But what is the matter, Mark, are you in trouble?" he asked, as he noted the grave expression upon the boy's face.

Mark Driscomb's voice trembled as he replied,

"Only the old story, sir, father—"

"I understand," interrupted the clergyman, anxious to save Mark the pain of further explanation.

"Sometimes I feel as though it was no use trying to do what is right. Everything goes wrong at home, and O, Mr. Foster! last night father struck mother!" cried the boy, covering his face with his hands and giving vent to pent-up emotion which he had struggled so hard to repress.

"Has it come to that?" murmured the clergyman. Placing both hands upon Mark's shoulders, he said, "Don't give up yet, my boy. There is work for you to do; and even though it be the eleventh hour, there is still hope."

"What can I do?" cried Mark, despairingly.

"A great deal," said Mr. Foster, earnestly. "More human aid will not save your father, go to the One who is ever ready to reach out his strong right hand to succor those who believe in him. The way will surely be made

clear. I think of your mother, of her heart-aches and humiliations, and yet she has never ceased to pray to the Saviour who feedeth even the sparrows. Promise me that you will ask for aid."

"You make me feel ashamed, sir, when you talk like that. I will pray to God. I would not be my mother's child if I did not love and trust him, but sometimes—"

"I know that there are times when the heart grows weary," said Mr. Foster, as Mark hesitated. "That is the time to ask for strength, and rest assured, if you are earnest and patient, it will be given you. Remember, my boy, 'no cross, no crown.' Put your trust in him who says, 'Follow me, I am the way,' and the trust will not be betrayed. Be of good cheer, cling to the ray of hope which your Saviour will give you for a guiding light. I must leave you now, but I will pray earnestly that the one for whom your prayers are offered may be guided aright," concluded Mr. Foster, grasping Mark's hand sympathetically.

As Mark crossed the threshold of his home, a loud voice called out,

"It's about time you put in an appearance! Go up to Doyle's and get me ten cents' worth of whiskey."

"Father, I cannot go there. Anything else I will do willingly," said Mark, in a low tone.

"Why can't you go?" asked his father, angrily.

"Because it would be a sin for me to go there and get liquor for you," replied the boy, firmly.

"I'll teach you to disobey me!" cried the infuriated man.

Perhaps the expression in Mark's eyes stayed the uplifted hand, for, with an angry motion, the father let it fall to his side, at the same time exclaiming,

"I'll go for it myself. 'Tis the last time I'll ask a favor of you!"

Mark gazed sadly after the receding figure of his unnatural parent. Falling upon his knees he prayed long and earnestly for the way to be made clear.

The gentle pressure of a hand upon his shoulder caused him to spring to his feet, and putting his arms around the frail form of the mother who had suffered so much, he mingled his tears with the scalding drops that fell from eyes grown dim with weeping. With arms clasping each other, they prayed earnestly for the man who was plunging headlong toward destruction.

The school-house was nearly at hand, yet Mark lingered in the little garden. As he walked slowly to and fro along the pathway, his face wore a troubled expression. His hands were clasped tightly together, and every action betrayed the intensity of the emotion that surged through the boy's heart. His meditations were interrupted by the sound of voices.

There was a large factory situated several squares from Mark's home, and the men to whom the voices belonged were evidently employed there.

"I got mighty weak about noon-time," said one of the voices. "If I could get a good cup of coffee I'd be glad enough to keep away from Doyle's."

"My case exactly," said another voice. "I bring my dinner, but have got to get something to wash it down. I got into Doyle's with all the other boys an' sometimes I spend a quarter before I get out. I've heard half a dozen of

the fellows say that they spend enough money at Doyle's to keep all their children in shoes."

"Well, I guess that's so," replied the first voice. "My Billy's feet are on the ground. When pay-day came around I found that I owed Doyle two dollars and a half, an' so Billy had to go without his shoes. I've got to have somethin' to drink in the middle o' the day, that's settled!" concluded the speaker, emphatically.

Both men moved away still discussing the importance of having "somethin' to wash down their dinner."

Mark, with eyes cast down, remained motionless for a few minutes after the men had taken their departure. Suddenly he clasped his hands together and exclaimed,

"I'll do it! If I can't keep all the men away from Doyle's, some of them will be sure to stop going there; and, besides, perhaps I can make enough to help mother; then she will not have to work so hard."

Mark re-entered the house, and seeking his mother laid his project before her.

"It's a good plan, my son. You can rely on my assistance. Who knows," she murmured, "but it may prove the means of saving many a man from the effects of the evil that has ruined so many lives!"

"There is the money that Mr. Robbins paid me for running errands. I will take it and buy coffee, sugar, milk, and half a dozen tin cups. Come, mother let us count the money," said Mark.

Mrs. Driscomb opened a bureau drawer, and taking therefrom a box, handed it to Mark, saying, "There ought to be nearly a dollar."

Mark opened the lid of the box; he peered into it, he turned it upside down. "Why, mother," he cried in astonishment, "the box is empty!"

Mrs. Driscomb covered her face with her hands and sobbed.

"Even the mite earned by his child must go to that dreadful place!"

"Never mind, mother, dry your tears," said Mark, placing his arms tenderly around her neck. "There will be another way; I feel sure of it. Mr. Foster says that God will answer our prayers if we are in earnest and wait patiently. I keep saying, 'Help us, help us,' all the time, and somehow I feel as though God will answer."

A knock upon the door interrupted them.

"Ah, Mark, I am glad to find you at home," said a pleasant voice. "I will be very busy to-morrow. One of my clerks is down with a fever. Can you come to the store and remain all day? I will pay you seventy-five cents for the day's work."

"I will be glad to go, Mr. Robbins; thank you very much for asking me," replied Mark.

"There, mother!" cried the boy, "didn't I tell you that help would come! I'll get the coffee and sugar at Mr. Robbins' store; he will let me have the things at cost."

The next morning Mark was up with the lark, and as he walked briskly in the direction of Mr. Robbins' store his eyes brightened and his cheeks glowed as he thought of the good he might be able to accomplish.

"When he started for home in the evening he carried with him three

pounds of coffee and an equal quantity of sugar.

"When I told Mr. Robbins about my plan he gave me half a dozen bright new tin cups, and charged only twenty-five cents for the sugar and coffee," said Mark.

The noon whistle at the factory sounded loud and clear. As the men descended the stairs and passed through the broad corridor they paused to look at a boy who stood near the outer door. Beside him, on the floor, stood a great tin kettle filled with some kind of steaming liquid.

"Come here, boys, an' get a whiff o' this stuff!" exclaimed a big, broad-shouldered workman. "What's the charge for a pint o' that?" he asked.

"Five cents, sir," was the reply.

"Here's yer five cents. Give us a cup brim full; 'twill save the time spent in walkin' to Doyle's," said the man.

"I'll be ather takin' a cup for the same rayson," said a brawny son of Erin.

"And I, and I, and I," chorused a dozen voices.

"This is coffee!" said one of the men, as he quaffed the contents of his cup.

"I'll be here every day at noon," said Mark, as he poured out the last cupful.

"I say, bub, you'd better bring another kettleful!" was the parting injunction given by one of the men.

Time passed on and Doyle's customers fell off one by one.

"That boy o' yourn's tryin' to ruin me!" said Pat Doyle, wrathfully, as he shoved a glass half filled with whiskey toward a figure standing at the bar.

"Trying to ruin you?" echoed the figure in an astonished tone.

"Yes, that's what I said," replied Pat. "The money spint by the men at the wurruks paid me rint. I'm two months behind owin' to me custumers droppin' off. It's all the fault av that spalpean. He's been at the door av the factory dealin' out cups av coffee ivery day at noon these two months."

The man to whom Pat addressed his remarks paused with the glass half-way to his lips. As the proprietor of the saloon concluded, the glass was slowly lowered and placed upon the counter, and without uttering a word the man turned and left the saloon.

"Is that the way money is earned to buy what I ought to provide?" The man shivered as though seized with ague. How intensely he longed to go back and drink the fiery liquid left untouched upon the counter. He turned as if about to re-enter the saloon. The words, "He's been at the door av the factory dealin' out cups av coffee ivery day at noon these two months," seemed to startle before him in letters of fire.

"I'll not go there again," he muttered, turning his face resolutely away. "Mark selling coffee to men to save them from my fate, and to keep his mother and himself from starving? O, my boy, my boy! My shame is greater than I can bear!"

As the miserable man wended his way homeward the tempter whispered, "Come, go back; Mark gets along very well. No need for you to deprive yourself of what you need. Come, you paid for the drink, it is waiting for you. See how you tremble! It will make you strong again."

All the way home John Driscomb