

It has been proven, beyond a doubt, that idleness breeds vice. Mental and manual activity keeps the head and hands in hearty, healthy exercise, but when idle, they most readily submit to the lower, selfish nature.

The prize-fighter is generally a man of idleness. I speak of those who make it a profession. Among these there are few who are not gamblers or all-round sports. It is true, he must exercise his muscular powers. He must undergo severe hardships, and inure himself to great physical endurance. But outside of his training he is idle. His associates are of the same sort. When not training, the prize-fighter seeks recreation, and his favorite haunts are the billiard hall and poker room, and the patrons of these dens of vice are his companions. Thus it is shown that his profession brings him in contact with a class of men whose influence is demoralizing.

Another thing is its influence. All over our fair land to-day its influence has been felt. We find the youth of our country imbibing the spirit of pugilism. But he is only putting into practice what he has learned from others.

And last, but by no means least, is its brutality. For a man to stand up and beat another, or submit to such treatment, is, in the eyes of all right thinking men, a brutal act. It is no rare occurrence to hear of a participant in a prize fight having a limb or jaw broken, or an eye lost. But worst of all, there is no sympathy for each other. The idea is to knock the other man out. No matter how much he is mutilated, he must stand his ground until forced to give in, and suffer defeat or rejoice in victory. To prove this assertion, allow me to mention a fight between John L. Sullivan and a would-be champion, who, after having had an arm broken, fought three rounds with tiger-like ferocity, only to sink beneath his opponents crushing blows. No man has a right to submit to such brutality, much less to administer such treatment.

I have given you a brief condensed view of prize-fighting as I see it; of its influence both on the man and on the youth, and last, but not least, its brutality. For of all places where brutality is magnified, there is none more demoralizing than in the pugilistic arena.

Select Recitations for Literary Circles.

DIVINE COMPASSION.

Long since, a dream of Heaven I had,
And still the vision haunts me oft;
I see the saints in white robes clad,
The martyrs with their palms aloft;
But hearing still, in middle song,
The ceaseless dissonance of wrong,
And shrieking, with hid faces, from the strain
Of sad, beseeching eyes, full of remorse and pain.

The glad song falters to a wail,
The harping sinks to low lament;
Before the still uplifted veil
I see the crowned foreheads bent,
Making more sweet the heavenly air
With breathings of unselfish prayer;
And a voice saith: "O Pity which is pain,
O Love that weeps, fill up my sufferings
which remain!"

"Shall souls redeemed by Me refuse
To share My sorrow in their turn?
Or, sin-forgiven, My gift abuse
Of peace with selfish unconcern?
Has saintly ease no pitying care?
Has faith no work, and love no prayer?
While sin remains, and souls in darkness
dwell,
Can heaven itself be heaven, and look unmoved on hell?"

Then through the Gates of Pain, I dream,
A wind of Heaven blows coolly in;
Fainter the awful discords seem;
The smoke of torment grows more thin;
Tears quench the burning soil, and thence
Spring sweet, pale flowers of penitence;
And through the dreary realm of man's despair,
Star-crowned an angel walks, and lo! God's
hope is there!

Is it a dream? Is Heaven so high
That pity cannot breathe its air?
Its happy eyes forever dry;
Its holy lips without a prayer!
My God! my God! if thither led
By Thy free grace unmerited,
No crown nor palm be mine, but let me keep
A heart that still can feel, and eyes that still
can weep.

JOHN G. WHITTIER.