

WHAT THE ROPE MEANS.

BY THOROUGH I. CUTLER, D.D.

When the wretched Chicago murderer, George Foster, was about swinging off into eternity from the gallows, it is said that he gave a push to the rope which dangled beside him, and said to the bystanders: "That rope means a bottle of rum!" There is no doubt that the fatal noose which slipped over Foster's neck lately in New York meant precisely the same thing. The Foster whom Dr. Tyng knew in the Sunday-school was not the malicious lad, likely to grow up into a wanton murderer; he was not naturally brutal. The bottle made him a brute on the night of his frightful crime. Strip away all the volumes of argument, appeal, and apology that have grown out of the famous Foster case, and you will find that the rope which ended the case "means a bottle of rum."

That is what four-fifths of all the murders mean. Even if not committed under the atrocious craze of drunkenness, the murderer was yet actuated to his devilish purpose by the influence of strong drink. Booth never would have put that pistol-ball into the brain of our Lincoln if he had not stiffened his nerves by that last dose of brandy. I do not believe that one deliberate homicide out of twenty is ever committed without a previous use of the conscience-killing dram. And if the hangman's rope "means a bottle," so does many a rope of the suicide. Nearly all the striped jackets in our penitentiaries mean the same thing. Examine the official reports of our prisons and almshouses, and you will find that rum furnishes more "customers" than all other sources of crime and pauperism combined. The brothel, too, is bottomed upon the bottle. Every house of infamy is a drinking-house. Costly wines are both the bait, the stimulant, and the opiate to conscience in all the fashionable resorts of prostitution. "The likes of us," said a poor street prostitute of London, "could never live as we do without the gin." Who shall attempt to compute the amount of crime engendered by the bottle, when we consider that during the year 1871 this country either made or imported three hundred and twenty-five million gallons of alcoholic drinks! If all that liquor were loaded on wagons—at twenty barrels on a wagon—the horrid procession would reach from New York to San Francisco. At a fair estimate of results, about one wagon in every twenty would contain the corpse of a legitimate victim of this stupendous amount of poison! Now the Christian nation which leads up such a procession of liquor-casks as that must expect to pay the toll. This is in the line of God's inevitable retributions. If our nation manufactures and imports 325,000,000 gallons of drink, then we must be prepared to read the undeniable fact that the pecuniary cost of intemperance (saying nothing of its moral waste and havoc) will foot up each year a round billion of dollars! This is the tax we pay for the bottle.

But to return to "the rope." Who hung Driver? Who hung Foster? Who sent the two young drunken car-thieves to prison for fifteen years last week in New York? The ready answer is: "Society." The commonwealth hung the murderers and locked up the thieves in self-defense. Those gallows were erected and that prison built to punish crime and to protect human life and property. Society has a hemp-rope and a cell for drunken murderers and thieves, and yet society licenses the establishments which manufacture the thieves and the murderers. New York's law permits and protects the traffic which furnished to Foster his maddening glass. New York's social customs encouraged and tempted Foster to become a drinker. A very large proportion of New York's Christian citizens set the example of using the social glass, even though most of them may be able to keep "within moderation" in its use. And yet New York stands aghast around Foster's gibbet, and perhaps piously ejaculates: "The wages of sin is death." Very true. Death is the inevitable result of such sin. But was the wretched man who was hung the only sinner? Had the licensed dealer who sold him the fiery stimulant no partnership in that crime? Have those who license the dram-shop no share in the crime? And are all those who abet and sustain the fatal drinking usages of society entirely guiltless? If the drinking customs are fattening the gibbet and filling the prisons, then every supporter of these ensnaring and destructive customs has his or her share of responsibility for the terrible consequences.

Those "ropes" that have lately been swinging in the air at Chicago and New York suggest several solemn and weighty lessons. As one of the poor victims well said: "This rope means a bottle." He saw the result of his first spunking and exultating glass coming back to him in that awful draught of the gall of the gallows. He must have cursed the day that he touched it. But that is the end of thousands of "first glasses" drunk as thoughtlessly as Driver drank his. One lesson of these gibbets is: Never touch the first glass; never offer it to others.

A second lesson of these ropes is: If the community will continue to license and sustain the liquor traffic, then the community must "foot the bill" in murders, hangmen's ropes, and prisons crowded to the doorways. And no man in such community is guiltless who supports either the traffic or the drinking customs. The State of Indiana has lately passed an admirable law, inflicting the damages of drunkenness upon the sellers of strong drink. This is good as far as it goes. But why not prohibit the drunkard-makers entirely? And, when all the good statutes have been put upon the law-book, there yet lies behind them all that higher law of Heaven which pronounces it woe on every man who "puts the bottle to his neighbor," and also enjoins that none should "drink anything whereby our brother stumbleth."

Finally, those hideous "ropes" dangle in the face of our Christian churches, and they proclaim to us that we are not guiltless unless we preach and practice abstinence from the intoxicating cup. Come out and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing, saith the Lord.

[Change New York in the above article, to Ontario or Canada, and every word would be as applicable as it now stands. O prisons, our paupers, our murderers,

and our lunatics are being manufactured as surely and nearly as extensively, and certainly by the same instrumentality as on the other side. In 1872, there were 78,617,462 bushels of grain used for distillation in Ontario, from which 4,431,163 gallons of proof spirits were produced. Besides this 839,005 bushels of grain were in the same year used for malt. Do the Christian people of Canada think that they are guiltless in this matter.—Ed. B. A. P.]

THE AMERICAN CHURCHES.

The census reports of the number and accommodations of church edifices in the United States in 1870 are very suggestive as to the localized strength of the different religious sects.

More than two-thirds of the Baptist churches, and almost two-thirds of the sittings that they contain are found in fifteen of the Southern States, which have only a little over one-third of the general population. The whole population of the country is 38,555,763. The number in those Southern States is 13,762,600. In the whole country the Baptists have 12,857 edifices, 3,997,116 sittings. Of these totals, 3,465 edifices, with 2,418,542 sittings are in the Southern States—thus leaving only 4,392 churches, with 1,578,574 sittings in the other States and Territories, with their 24,503,153 inhabitants. Georgia has almost as many Baptist Churches as New York. New Jersey and Pennsylvania put together. The New England States have less than North Carolina. The four contiguous States of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee contain more than one-fourth of all the Baptist churches that are to be found in the nation.

It will surprise those who have met only with the reports in mass and of the communions only, and have never analyzed them, to be told that outside of the Southern States the Baptists differ numerically very little from our one branch of Presbyterians. It is generally stated in the rough that the Baptists have over 2,200,000 communicants, and our one branch of Presbyterians not 500,000. But the fact is that in the Northern States and Territories we have 1,489,370 church sittings, and the Baptists 1,578,574.

This confirms the general impression that a great preponderance of the Baptist strength lies among the negroes of the Southern States. We believe it will be found that elsewhere their communicants are not equal to the Presbyterian. We have before us detailed summaries of the Baptist membership by States in 1870. The total was 1,321,349. Of that number only 473,000 were in the late free States and Territories.

Nearly one-half of the Methodist strength is among that one-third of the population who compose the Southern States. The total number of edifices of the Methodists, of all kinds and names, is 21,387, with 6,223,200 sittings. Of these, 10,391 edifices and 2,896,949 sittings are found in those States. Pennsylvania, with three times the population of Georgia, has only about the same number of Methodist churches as the latter State. To the credit, however, of the denomination it should be said that its strength is well distributed. It has some churches in every State and Territory except Arizona and Idaho. Ohio is its banner State; and New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio contain more than one-fourth of its whole national strength. But in Pennsylvania they are behind Presbyterians.

The Presbyterians of the various branches have 8,634 churches, 3,857,172 sittings, of which 956,825, or considerably less than one-third, are in the Southern States. Their great strength (2,401,247 sittings, or more than two thirds of the whole, lies in the late free States. The churches of our denomination are also very generally diffused through the country; though, as is well understood, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania contain more than one-fourth of them. Those States report, 1,624 edifices, with 758,808 sittings. There were two States, (Maine and Rhode Island) in 1870 which were so unhappy as to contain no Presbyterian church. Five Territories suffered from the same deprivation, viz.: Arizona, Dakota, Idaho, Montana, Utah. But Utah, we believe, has since been taken out of that category, and so has Rhode Island.

The Episcopalians have in the whole country 2,601 edifices, and 991,051 sittings. About one-third (806,700 sittings) are in the Southern States. More than one-half (about five-ninths, or 552,061) are in the contiguous States of Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia. How slender are their accommodations for other parts of the country! It is somewhat strange also to observe this same want of expansion on a smaller scale in Pennsylvania. This sect of the Christian Church has in this State 94,182 church sittings, of which only a little more than one-half (or 50,121) are outside of Philadelphia. Moreover, there are thirty-four of the States and Territories which have each a smaller number of Episcopal churches than are to be found in Philadelphia alone, and here there are only 68. Our London correspondent stated last week that the strength of the Episcopal Church of England is found in the rural districts. That is not the case here.

The Congregationalists have 2,715 churches, with 1,117,212 sittings. The New England States contain more than one half of them—or 1,409 churches, with 668,850 sittings. In all the Southern States there are only 69 Congregational organizations. Outside of New England the great strength of the denomination is found in Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, New York, Ohio, and Wisconsin. In thirteen of the States and Territories they have none.

The Lutherans have in their four organizations, 2,776 church edifices, with 977,332 sittings. More than one-third of them (or 841 churches, with 839,128 sittings) are in Pennsylvania. We are glad to see they are stretching out into the Western States, where a large German element is to be found. In Illinois, Iowa, Ohio, and Wisconsin, they roll up goodly columns. But they have scarcely effected a lodgment in the Territories.

Of the Unitarian sittings (155,471) in 810 edifices, almost two-thirds (98,806) are in Massachusetts. The Divine Redeemer is

glorified by having such a small proportion of the rejectors of his divinity scattered through the other States. In all Pennsylvania there are only four Unitarian Societies, with accommodations for 2,050 persons.

The Universalists have decreased since 1860. They have now 603 edifices, (with 210,894 sittings) of which New York has 120, Massachusetts 87, Ohio 78, Maine 65, and Vermont 60. In no other State do they run up to 50. In 19 of the States and Territories they are down to zero.

The Friends are, in number, a feeble folk. They report 602 meeting houses, with 225,664 sittings. Pennsylvania, as will be expected, contains more than one-sixth of the number. Indiana, Iowa, New Jersey, New York, and Ohio, contain the larger part of the rest of them. They decreased very considerably during the last decade, but they still have their meetings in 24 of the States. They have none in any of the Territories.

The gentle Moravians do not extend geographically. They have only 67 churches, with 25,000 sittings. They are restricted to 18 States. In Pennsylvania they have 16 churches; in North Carolina 10; in Wisconsin 10; and these are their strongest sections.

The Roman Catholics are widely scattered through the States and Territories. Utah is the only Territory in which they have no organization. In all, they have 8,808 edifices, with 1,930,614 sittings. More than one-fourth of these are in New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio. In the Southern States they have about 700 churches. The North-western States of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin contain one-third of their whole strength, (1,200 churches.) They both centralize and expand. They are carefully establishing their centres all over the country; and in this respect, we can learn from them.

There are 189 Jewish organizations, with 152 edifices, having 73,265 sittings, in the United States. New York has the largest number, (33 synagogues;) Maine the next, (28;) Pennsylvania the next, (14.) Twenty-four other States have each from one up to nine. In 1860 there were, in all, 77; and, in 1850, 36—so that the Jews have doubled in each decade.

The Mormons have in Utah 161 edifices, which will seat 83,350 persons. They have ten more buildings in other parts of the Union. California bears the infliction of 8, Florida 1, Idaho 2, Illinois 2, Iowa 1, and Nebraska 1. We are a little amused at the estimated value of their properties. In 1850 they reported 16 edifices, worth \$84,790; in 1860, 24 edifices, worth \$801,100; and in 1870, 171 edifices, worth only \$656,750. This is a neat commentary on the financial influence of Mormonism. Is other real estate as much depressed by it? We hope the change of policy, to which President Grant's recent message looks, will work an improvement in both the morals and the property of the people.—Presbyterian.

CONGREGATIONALIST S.

The Congregational Quarterly publishes the statistics of the denomination, showing its strength and condition at the beginning of the present year. There is a total of 3,866 Congregational churches, of which 3,263 are within the limits of the United States, 83 in Canada, 5 in New Brunswick, 9 in Nova Scotia, and 6 in Jamaica. The total number of ministers is reported as being 3,201 in the United States, of these 2,253 appear to be engaged in pastoral work. The net increase of churches from last year is 61; there being a total of new churches formed of 123, while of the names 67 have been dropped, largely, it is presumed, by the change of centres of population. The total reported number of church members is 318,916; a net increase from last year of 6,362. The total number reported in Sabbath schools is 871,100; a net increase of 2,145. The total reported amount of benevolent contributions is \$1,305,872.68; a net increase of \$152,880.98; but only 2,426 churches have reported their contributions. It is the opinion of the compiler of these statistics that there are a few more than 400 Congregational ministers who are without charge, and available for the pastorate. On the other hand we have 642 churches actually vacant, 184 more supplied by licentiates and ministers of other denominations.

HUSBAND AND WIFE.

Did you ever hear the word "husband" explained? It means literally the "head of the house," the support of it, the person who keeps it together, as a band keeps together a sheaf of corn. There are many married men who are not husbands, because they are not the head of the house. Truly, in many cases, the wife is the husband; for oftentimes it is she who, by her prudence, and thrift, and economy, keeps the house together. The married man who, by his dissolute habits, strips his house of all comfort, is not a husband; in a legal sense he is, but in no other; for he is not a house-band; instead of keeping things together, he scatters them among the pawnbrokers.

And now let us see whether the word "wife" has not a lesson too. It literally means a weaver. Before our great cotton and cloth factories arose, one of the principal employments in every house was the fabrication of clothing; every family made its own. The wool was spun into thread by the girls, who were therefore called spinners; the thread was woven into cloth by their mother, who accordingly was called the weaver, or the wife; and another remnant of this old truth was discovered in the word "heirloom," applied to any old piece of furniture which had come down to us from our ancestors, and which, though it may be a chair or bed, shows that a loom was once a most important article in every house. Thus the word "wife" means weaver; and, as French well remarks, "in the word itself is wrapped up a hint of earnest, indoor, stay-at-home occupations as being fitted for her who bears this name."

The apostle Paul says, "Knowledge puffeth up." I have seen boys and girls very proud over their lessons and examinations, who had not wisdom enough to mend their clothes, or make a fire, or sweep a carpet, or harness a horse, or live two days without help. Wisdom is useful, knowledge is the raw stuff out of which we make wisdom.—Thomas K. Beecher.

PRESBYTERY OF PARIS.

An adjourned meeting of the Presbytery of Paris was held in Knox Church, Woodstock, on Tuesday the 8th day of April. The following are the more important items of business transacted: The Congregation of East Oxford was disjoined from those of Norwich and Wyndham and erected into a separate charge, with a view to the settlement of a Pastor. Mr. Robertson, Norwich, was elected Moderator pro tem. of the Kirk Session. A call from the congregation of Flamboro' West, to the Rev. James Robertson, of Norwich, was next considered. The call was read (signed by 92 members and 63 adherents), and also the extract minutes of Presbytery of Hamilton, and reasons for translation. Parties were called when there appeared—for the Presbytery of Hamilton, Rev. Mr. Porteous; for the Session of Flamboro', Mr. Henderson; and for the Congregation of Flamboro' Mr. Robert Christie, M.P.P., who severally addressed the Court, strongly urging the translation of Mr. Robertson from Norwich to West Flamboro'. The Clerk read answers to the reasons for translation, as prepared by the Norwich and Wyndham Congregations, and thereafter the representatives of said Congregations were heard.—Messrs. Barr, Jms. Donald and Deans, for the Norwich Church, and Messrs. Smith, McKnight and Scott, for the Wyndham Church. The members of Presbytery having given their opinions regarding the translation, at the request of Mr. Robertson, he was then asked for his decision, when he stated his inability to come to such a decision, and left the matter in the hands of the Presbytery. After prayer by Mr. McQuarrie, the Presbytery proceeded to deliberate, when on motion of Mr. McTavish, seconded by Mr. Penman, the Presbytery unanimously refused to grant the translation. The Moderator intimated the decision to the several parties, whereupon Mr. Porteous, on behalf of the Presbytery of Hamilton, craved extracts, which were granted. The Presbytery then proceeded to consider a call from Baltimore and Cold Springs in the Presbytery of Cobourg, to the Rev. Mr. Wright, of Erskine Church, Ingersoll. The call was read signed by 167 members and 18 adherents, with reasons for the translation of Mr. Wright to Baltimore. Reasons against said translation were also read, as prepared by the congregation of Erskine Church, Ingersoll. There appeared as Commissioners to prosecute the call, Rev. Mr. Douglas, on behalf of the Presbytery of Cobourg, and Messrs. Haig and Orr, on behalf of the Kirk Session and congregation of Baltimore and Cold Springs. There appeared on behalf of the Session of Erskine Church, Messrs. Ker and Hislop; and on behalf of the congregation, Mr. Adam Oliver, M.P.P., and Mr. McIntyre. The Commissioners having addressed the Court, the Moderator asked Mr. Wright to intimate his decision regarding the call. Subsequently after remarks from members of Presbytery, Mr. Wright declined the call; and the translation was accordingly refused. Mr. Douglas craved extracts on behalf of the Presbytery of Cobourg, which were granted. Mr. Wright, Minister, and Mr. Barr, Elder, were appointed on the Assembly's Committee of Bills and Overtures. It was moved by Mr. Cochrane, seconded by Mr. McMullen, and agreed, that a Committee be appointed to consider the stipends paid Ministers of the Presbytery, and report at a future meeting, as to whether any steps, or what steps should be taken in dealing with congregations who may at present give to their Pastors stipends insufficient for their comfortable support. The Committee was appointed as follows: Mr. Cochrane (Convener), and Messrs. McTavish and Robertson (Norwich) Ministers; and Messrs. Sutherland (Brantford) and Barr (Norwich), Elders. It was agreed that the Presbytery meet within Zion Church, Brantford, on the first Monday of May, at 7.30 p.m., (day before the meeting of the Synod of Hamilton) for the transaction of unfinished business, and that Mr. McTavish preach a sermon on the occasion, to be followed by a conference on the state of religion within the bounds. The members of Presbytery are expected to come to the meeting prepared to give in reports as to the state of religion in their respective congregations.

WM. COCHRANE, Presbytery Clerk

I have no doubt but that there are persons of every description, under every possible circumstance, in every lawful calling among Christians, who will go to heaven—thai all the world may see that neither their circumstances nor their calling prevented their being among the number of the blessed.—Cecil.

Pilgrimage.—The famous pilgrimage to Mecca, which is always a cause of anxiety to the European Governments, has been performed this year under the most reassuring conditions. Thanks to the intelligent zeal of the sanitary commission, composed of French, English, and Ottoman doctors, no cases of cholera have occurred among the visitors to the holy city, the number of whom is said to have exceeded 150,000.

HEAD WORK BEFORE BREAKFAST.—No or headwork ought to be postponed until the stomach is satisfied. The digestive organs ought to be supplied as soon as may be after sleep is shaken off. The lawyer should not go to his office nor the preacher to his desk, until he has ministered to the carnal appetite. Sermons written on an empty stomach will have in them but thin spiritual nutriment. We give no praise to one who boasts that he has done half a day's work before his morning meal, whether in the milking of cows or in the preparation of briefs. A "constitutional walk" of two or six miles, when the stomach is empty is not according to good physiology in spite of the example of aristocratic Boston ladies. Dickens did not get long life from the habit. A short walk or run in the fresh air may be well enough, and a few turns with the dumb bells. But the gymnasium should not be opened in the first hours of the morning.—Herald of Health.

Scientific and Useful.

LAMP SHADES POISONOUS.

Green-glaed lamp shades contain arsenic and sugar of lead; the heat reduces it in time to an impalpable powder, which the slightest breath or wind detaches into the atmosphere, when it is breathed into the lungs, and is at once conveyed into the circulation, giving at once a variety of disagreeable symptoms to those who habitually sit around such shades, which symptoms will promptly disappear if the shades are removed.—Hall's Journal of Health.

LIGHT AND HEALTH.

As an instance of the value of sunlight, Dupuytren, the celebrated physician, mentions the case of a French lady whose disease baffled the skill of the most eminent men. This lady resided in a dark room in one of the narrow streets of Paris. After a careful examination he was led to refer her complaint to the absence of light, and caused her to be removed to a more cheerful situation. The change was attended with most beneficial results—all her complaints vanished. It is remarkable that Lavoisier, writing in the last century, should have placed light as an agent of health, even before pure air. In fact, where you can obtain abundance of light, it is generally possible to obtain pure air. In England a similar thing occurs; invalids are almost always shut up in close rooms, curtains drawn, and light excluded.

BOILED OATMEAL.

Put three or four tablespoonful of oatmeal into a saucepan, add a little salt, pour on boiling water until the saucepan is about two-thirds full, stir it well and set it on the stove. It should be stirred quite frequently until it begins to thicken, after which, if set where it will boil slowly without danger of burning, it will not need much attention. It will cook in about twenty minutes. Eat with syrup and cream. Maple syrup is best, but a very good substitute may be made by dissolving clean brown sugar in a little water over the fire.

TO CURE BEEF.

To cure beef so as to have it tender, sweet and juicy, strew a little salt on the bottom of the barrel, then fill up with the beef, and pour over it until it is covered a brine made of five pounds of salt, four ounces of salt-petre, and one quart of molasses, (to every one hundred pounds of beef,) all thoroughly dissolved in cold water. If desired to keep for a long time, it may be necessary to either scald over it, make a new brine, and perhaps add a little more salt; but as it is it will keep all winter, and one can at any time have a nice beef-steak by cutting slices from some of the best lean pieces and frying in just water enough to cover, seasoning with butter.

ECONOMY OF FUEL.

A correspondent in The British Workman tells how to build a fire as follows:—The person laying a fire should fill the grate up to the top bar with coals, putting large pieces at the bottom and smaller over them, then upon these paper enough to light the sticks, which should be laid upon, and not under the coal. Cover the sticks with the cinders remaining from the previous day's fire; these will soon become red hot; the coal below will be warmed sufficiently to make it throw off gas; this, passing through the hot cinders, will be kindled, and will burn with a bright flame, instead of going up the chimney in smoke, as it does when the coals are laid on the top.

The fire thus laid will require no poking, and will burn clear and bright for from six to eight hours without the necessity for more coals to be thrown on.

GARDENING IN OLD AGE.

A writer in The Cornhill Magazine recommends to one in the Autumn of his life to take to gardening, if he has not already experienced its pleasures. Of all occupations in the world, it is the one which best combines repose and activity. It is not idleness; it is not stagnation; and yet it is perfect quietude. Like all things mortal, it has its failures and its disappointments, and there are some things hard to understand. But it is never without its rewards, and perhaps if there were nothing but successful cultivation, the aggregate enjoyment would be less. It is better for the occasional shadows that come over the scene. The discipline, too, is most salutary. It tries our patience, and it tries our faith. But even in the worst of seasons, there is far more to reward and encourage, than to dishearten and disappoint. There is no day in the year without something to afford tranquillity and pleasure to the cultivator of flowers, something on which the mind may rest with profit.

DATES.

There are seventy-three species of dates known among the Egyptians, Syrians and Arabians; and yet out of this large number there is only one quality which is considered safe to be shipped by sea, which is known among the Arabs as El Jhabadiah.

I found an immense quantity of this date in the neighborhoods of Bussarah, Muscat, Zanzibar, and Gennah, on the River Nile. In the neighborhoods of Bagdad, Bussarah, and Hillah, in the province of Irak or Mesopotamia, the gardeners substitute the law of nature instead of the artificial process. The females are planted in clusters, and a male tree is generally planted in the midst of every four or five female trees. When the flower of the male tree becomes dry and near, and the female tree becomes fruitful. The dates of Tor and around Mount Sinai are very small, dry and sweet. They are sold by weight, in packages covered with kid skins. Both sheep, goat, and kid skins are procurable along the shores of the Red sea for less pence than the shillings they cost in Europe. The chief use they make of the goat and kid skins is to convert them into bags for carrying water or holding butter or oil. Formerly skins of every description were dear, and in great demand; but since the introduction of casks and earthen jars among the dealers in butter and other soft merchandize, the price of hides and other skins has been very much reduced.—Once A Week.