

Messenger and Visitor

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"Look Not Thou Upon the Wine."

The presence of evil in the world, impregnating its whole moral atmosphere and gathering at innumerable points into centres of subtle and powerful influence, involves temptation for everyone capable of distinguishing between good and evil. Temptation is a condition of life in the world and is not to be escaped. God's providence is over it all, and this testing by evil forms a part of the necessary discipline of life. But the Bible has many counsels against rushing heedlessly into temptation, and to our Lord this principle seemed so important that he embodied it in one of the petitions of the short prayer which he taught his disciples—"Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." Temptation is inevitable, evil stands in the way of every man and must be bravely faced, but let a man beware how he courts temptation and dallies with sin, for it is playing with death. Courage is not recklessness. The true soldier is always a man of courage. He will keep his face to the foe, and when the issue of the battle depends upon it, he will stand boldly to the repulse against the most overwhelming odds or rush to the attack in the very jaws of death, but he will not needlessly expose himself to the fire of the enemy or recklessly and vainly throw away his life.

There are few temptations which beset men more insidious and more terribly destructive of human hope and happiness than that which has for its symbol the wine-cup. Who can measure the disaster and degradation which have befallen mankind by the floods of strong drink which have found ingress through the gate-way of unnatural appetite? What tongue or pen could adequately suggest the horror of it all,—the "woe," the "sorrow," the "contentions," the "wounds without cause," the poverty, the crime, the wasting of national resources, the blighting of manhood, the cursing of homes, the murder of womanhood, childhood and love,—all the nameless misery and incalculable loss that come to mankind through indulgence of that appetite which is developed in so many by strong drink.

The words which stand as the heading of this article are part of an admonition included in the Bible lesson for next Sunday—an admonition which had been recognized as having at least as great force and significance for the men of this present day, as for those to whom it was first addressed. It is worthy of observation in this connection that the Bible's admonitions on this subject are generally addressed to drunkards and to those who through indulgence in wine are in danger of reaching the drunkard's position. This does not argue that the whole responsibility for the tremendous evils resulting from the manufacture, sale and use of strong drink is to be laid at the door of the drinkers. Considering the terrible results constantly flowing from the business as a whole, it would seem quite impossible that any man in whose heart and mind there dwells anything of the spirit of Christianity could be willing to accept the responsibility involved in any connection with the manufacture of and traffic in strong drink. The business is, on the best side of it, an incubus upon the nation, sapping its prosperity and strength, and at the worst is a vampire of hell fattening and fattening upon the very food and souls of its victims. What Christian can have part with this iniquity? What Christian can stand by, unmoved and silent, while the venom of it fills the veins and poisons the life of the nation, and while the moral sentiment of the country as registered at the polls and in Parliament is seen to lack the positive force necessary to the prohibition of the

liquor business, or even to any large and general measure of temperance reform. It is quite right, therefore, in discussing the question of responsibility for the drink evil, to urge the responsibility of the makers and dealers in intoxicating liquors; it is quite right to urge the responsibility of governments and legislators and citizens, for each and all are accountable in this matter. But we ought not to forget that upon which the Bible lays so strong emphasis, the responsibility of the drinkers themselves and that of those whose duty it is to train and fortify the minds of the young against the insidious temptations of the wine cup and the saloon. Too frequently, too generally, one might almost say, this fact is left out of sight. From the way in which some speakers and writers are wont to discuss the temperance question one might suppose that the men who are tempted by the drink evil are mere bundles of passivity and helplessness, without knowledge of good and evil, without will power or prudence or responsibility for themselves or for others, and that if a saloon is open in their path they may be expected to find there the door to perdition as surely as a blind man to fall into a ditch which stands open across his way. It is well to recognize the fact that in attaining the object to be aimed at in any system of temperance reform much must depend upon the promotion of a strong and intelligent public sentiment in favor of total abstinence. We must destroy the demand as well as cut off the supply, and in proportion as the former is effected will it be possible to achieve the latter.

At the present time we are in some danger of losing sight of the importance which attaches to education in the promotion of temperance, the education of the home, the school, the press, the platform and the pulpit, the education which demonstrates that abstinence is better than indulgence, which warns of the danger that lurks, like a coiled serpent, in the intoxicating cup, an education that aims to keep the home free from the contamination of intoxicants and to create in the child's mind a horror of the drunkard's way, an education that calls all men, and especially all Christian men, to pure and wholesome living and to self-sacrificing effort on behalf of the welfare of their fellowmen. Education along such lines and through such media as here indicated has done much in the past to bring the temperance sentiment of this country up to the point of effectiveness which it has attained, and we shall be making a great mistake if now we fail to employ these means of developing Christian temperance sentiment among our people for all that they are able to effect.

President McKinley.

After a little more than a week of battling with death, the President's vitality succumbed to the great conqueror and the end came at a few minutes past two o'clock on Saturday morning. The reports sent out by the surgeons in attendance, after they had made an examination and had dressed the President's wounds, gave hope of his recovery, and the tone of their reports grew more and more hopeful for several days, until by Wednesday the public had been led to believe that danger was practically past and that the President was fairly started on the road to recovery. But evidently the diagnosis had failed to disclose all the facts of the case, or else the physicians in attendance had not taken the public into their confidence, for on Thursday there was a marked change in the tone of the bulletins issued from the sick chamber, the despatches announced that the symptoms had become much less favorable and expressed grave apprehensions as to the result. These conditions continued through Thursday night and Friday. Early Friday evening it seemed evident that all hope was past and the end very near. The rugged strength of Mr. McKinley's constitution however prolonged the battle with death for several hours, until midnight was past, and then the sufferer sank gradually and quietly to rest. From the accounts which have been published of the closing hours of the President's life, it would seem that he died, as he had lived, in the exercise of a calm Christian faith. He was able to see and converse with his wife for a few minutes, and the report of the interview is deeply pathetic. Shortly before he sank into unconsciousness, Mr. McKinley repeated a part of the hymn "Nearer My God to Thee." Among his last conscious utterances were these words addressed to those around him, "Good-bye all, good-bye; it is God's way; His will be done."

The death of President McKinley, the third President within a generation to fall by an assassin's hand, is a blow which the great American nation feels keenly and through all its parts. Political parties and policies are forgotten in the sincere and universal sorrow which the people feel for their dead ruler,—a sorrow mingled with righteous indignation and horror at that diabolical spirit of anarchism which could inspire a deed so dastardly and fiendish in its character. Such deeds are as insane as they are wicked, for, as Professor Goldwin Smith has recently pointed out, they are in the highest degree adapted to defeat the ends which the anarchists have in view, not only by making the name and doctrines of anarchism detestable in the minds of the people generally, but by creating popular sympathy for the rulers against whom the murderous hands of the anarchists are lifted.

The civilized world sympathizes deeply with the people of the United States in their loss and shares their horror at the awful deed which has robbed the American nation of a just and able ruler whose personal disposition and governmental policy made for peace and friendly relations with the nations of the world. The attitude of President McKinley and his Government toward Great Britain has been throughout of a courteous character, and it appears to have been always his sincere desire to promote relations of peace and friendship between the two great English-speaking peoples. Because of what he was as a ruler, as well as for his personal and domestic virtues, the regard of the people of the British Empire for the murdered President is most kindly and sincere. Very sincerely the people of Canada sympathize with the bereaved people of the United States, and this feeling finds free and unaffected expression through the press and the pulpit and in conversation as men meet by the way.

In the late President's character and career there is much that is typically American, and this fact reveals the sources of the nation's strength. Mr. McKinley is another instance, like Lincoln and Grant and Benjamin Harrison, of a man rising from the ranks, by virtue of ability, character and distinguished service, to the highest position in the gift of his country.

Born in an Ohio village and beginning life as a teacher in the public schools, he heard the call of his country in the hour of its need, and, at the age of eighteen, entered the army as private, working upward by merit, through years of service, until the rank of Major was attained. After the war was over the young man returned eagerly to the pursuits of peace. Soon his ability for public service was recognized and he was started in that path of advancement which he steadily pursued until he reached the President's chair. Mr. McKinley will not probably take rank among the greatest Americans who have lived, but he has occupied the office of Chief Magistrate at a time when the nation has been busily engaged in making history, and he has exercised an important influence in determining its new line of foreign policy. That policy has been subject to severe criticism both within and without the United States, but whatever may be the verdict of history upon the wisdom of American imperialism, it is certain that during these trying and eventful years, Mr. McKinley has presided over the affairs of his nation, not only in a way to win the endorsement of a large majority of his countrymen, but also with a dignity, a tact, a manifest integrity of purpose and a wisdom which have won for him and for his government the profound respect of the nations. His sudden taking away in the midst of his strength and his popularity, though it plunges his nation into grief and appalls the world, will nevertheless serve to embalm his name in the hearts of his countrymen and to impress upon them what was best in his ideals and his character.

Editorial Notes.

—An English paper makes mention of the funeral at Worthenbury, Flintshire, of a person who had sung in the village choir for ninety years.

—Not long since a vessel left Boston for the west coast of Africa with a cargo of rum and gin valued at over \$120,000. The Congregationalist very truly remarks that it will take a good many missionary contributions to counterbalance the curse of that cargo.

—It is reported that Dr. W. Robertson Nicoll, editor of The British Weekly and The Expositor, will visit Canada