

PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

THE CURSE OF DRUNKENNESS.

Archdeacon Farrar is an earnest advocate of temperance. He pleads with his accustomed eloquence in behalf of this great moral and social reform. He was called on lately to preach on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Church of England Temperance Society. The sermon, from which the following extracts are taken, was preached in Westminster Abbey, Dr. Farrar taking for his text Deut. xi. 26: "Behold, I set before you a blessing and a curse."

Begin, then, with the fact that the direct expenditure of the nation for intoxicating drinks is reckoned at £136,000,000 a year, and the indirect, which we are forced to pay from the results of drunkenness, at £100,000,000 more. Maintain, if you will, that alcohol is a harmless luxury; you still cannot deny that for the vast majority it is not a necessity. Whole races of men, the votaries of whole religions, do without it, and gain by its absence. From 20,000 prisoners in England it is cut off from the day of their imprisonment, and they are not the worse, but the stronger and the healthier from its withdrawal. There are some five million total abstainers in England, and the impartial statistics of insurance prove conclusively that longevity is increased by abstention from strong drink. The most magnificent feats of strength and endurance of which mankind has ever heard have been achieved without it. At the very best, then, it is a luxury.

We have assumed hitherto that intoxicating drinks are nothing in the world but a harmless luxury; but every man knows that they are not.

THE VOICE OF SCIENCE

has laid it down unconditionally that all the young, and all who are in perfect health, do not need them, and are better without them. Many of the highest scientific authorities tell us further that even the moderate use of them is the cause of many painful disorders and thousands of premature deaths.

Then, next, what does the prevalence of drunkenness involve? It means that to thousands life becomes a long disease. Solomon told us that truth 3000 years ago. "Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contention? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. At last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder." *Delirium tremens*—that inconceivably awful and agonizing illness—is but one of God's executioners upon excess. The fact that a nation is addicted to drink, and drunkenness means that the health of myriads will be ruined; it means that myriads of children, with diseased bodies, fatuous minds, and depraved impulses, will be, in the awful language of an old preacher, "not born into the world, but damned into the world," as idiots, or cripples, or predestined drunkards; a curse to nations, a curse to their neighbours and to themselves, a curse to the very ideal of humanity which they drag down and degrade, poisoning its very life-blood, and barring its progress to the goal of better days. O! Nations may enjoy their revelries; but the river of enjoyment flows into a sea of misery, and disease is only indulgence taken at a latter stage.

Nor is it only the bodies of men that suffer, it is their souls. Powerless for his deliverance, the conscience of the drunkard is not powerless for his torture. Robert Burns, Charles Lamb, and Hartley Coleridge have uttered the cry of men who have thus been swept over the cataract. The Spartans, when they wished to turn their children from the shame of intemperance, showed them the physical degradation of drunken Helots; but the physical results are nothing to the moral devastation, the abject servitude, the spiritual catastrophe of the man who has given himself over to the bondage of drink. When he recovers from the degradation of the animal, it is to feel the anguish of a lost soul. That is the reason why, year by year, drink not only crowds the workhouses with paupers, and the gaol with felons, and the asylum with lunatics, and the hospitals with disease, but also swells more than any other cause—swells week by week, and year by year—the list of those who through

THE AWFUL GATE OF SUICIDE

rush, with rude insult, into the presence of their God. "The measure of alcohol consumed in a district," said

Baron Dowse, "is the measure of the degradation." Whenever the drink tide rises highest, there, too, is the high-water mark of suicide, mortality, and crime. Wherewithal a man—or a nation—sinneth by the same shall he be punished.

Nor is this all. The curse does not stay with him who caused it. It spreads in concentric circles of ruin. The drunkard almost invariably drags down his wife and family into the lurid whirlpool of his own retribution. Go to some public-house on Saturday night, between ten and twelve, when the miserable workingman is pouring into the till of the publican, and the purse of the gin-distiller, the money which should clothe and feed his wife and little ones; see when the gin-palaces in our most pauperized districts are cleared at night, a scene which, for vileanness, cannot be paralleled in any region of the world. Then follow the drunken man or drunken woman into the lair, which they call their home. Home? It is a Dantean hell of brutality and squalor, of which the very air reeks with abomination! "In former times the wife was usually the victim of her husband's brutishness; now she becomes in innumerable cases the partner in his sin. In either case, be she victim or associate, no creature on earth so demands our pity." While threats and blows resound in that curse-laden air, the children—the ragged, miserable, half-starved, degraded children—the children who will grow up hereafter to recruit the ranks of the felon and the harlot, huddle together in mute terror. "They do not cry; such children seldom do shed tears. Nature could never furnish a fountain to meet such demands." Often they make their escape into cellar or chimney, or hide themselves under the rotten heap of rags or straw, and do not venture to creep out, half suffocated, till the drink-maddened fiend whom they call "father" is away, or till he has slept off for a time the vitriol madness. And in most of our large towns there are whole streets, and alleys, and districts of such drunkards' homes—infamous streets which hide hundreds of blighted families, the disgrace of our civilization and the disgrace of our Christianity. The only things which flourish there are the public-houses, which confronting the minimum of virtue with the maximum of temptation, drain from the wretched neighbourhood its last life; and, like the fungus or the decaying tree, feed on the ruin which is their boon. We have heard much in these few days of

"HORRIBLE LONDON,"

and of the bitter cry of its abject. What makes these slums so horrible? I answer, with the certainty and the confidence of one who knows, Drink! And what is the remedy? I tell you that every remedy you attempt will be a miserable failure; I tell the nation, with the conviction founded on experience, that there will be no remedy till you save these outcasts from the temptations of drink. Leave the drink, and you might build palaces for them in vain. Leave the drink, and before a year was over your palaces would reek with dirt and squalor, with infamy and crime. Of the trade in general, which ministers to this temptation, I will say nothing; but at least in such vile streets as these, whence, day and night, this bitter cry of abject cities rings in the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth, I should have thought that any man who believes in God, that any man who calls himself a Christian, would have been, not ashamed only, but afraid to swell those geysers of curse and ruin.

But the tempted, the victims of drink—I ask you, do these men these women, do these children, do these wretched districts, or do they not, deserve our pity, and demand our efforts at reform? Is it or is it not—surely the question is plain and pressing—our duty to content ourselves with clever epigrams and plausible sophisms, and to be infinitely tender to the vested interests in the uses of human ruin or with stern effort and inflexible perseverance, to reduce an evil so colossal, to redeem men, our brothers, from a misery so deep as this?

Yet even now I have not come to the worst, or anything like the worst. For the abuse of drink, besides being, by unanimous testimony, a main cause of pauperism, disease, and madness, is also, by irresistible evidence, the main cause of crime, the all but exclusive cause of crimes of violence. I might quote the emphatic, the oft-repeated, the uncompromising testimony of almost every judge upon the bench. They have done their best to interpose between us and our degradation the purity of their ermine. They have said, for instance, that Saturday, means "pay-

day, drink-day, and crime-day," and that many a man "enters the door of a public-house respectable and respected, and leaves it a felon."

Not one single day passes over one single town in England without some wretchedness, crime and, horror caused by drink. Week by week in the *Alliance News*, is published a ghastly list, called "Fruits of the Traffic." It is not invented; it is not concocted; it is not garbled. It consists simply of cuttings from multitudes of perfectly neutral newspapers, the records of police courts and sessions. I cannot enter into these. The human hand can perpetrate, the human heart can conceive, the human frame can suffer horrors of which the human lips refuse to speak. Take the evidence of two weeks alone; the blessed week in which we listen to the melody of angel songs, and the first week of the glad New Year. For two pence you may purchase the record of events which drink caused for those two weeks of 1882 in England only. It fills a large double-columned pamphlet of thirty-six pages. Thirty-six pages of what—in this our Christian England, in Christmas week? Thirty-six pages of stabbing, cutting, wounding; of brutal assaults on women, on children; of public peril and accident; of deaths, sudden, violent, preventible; of homicide; of parricide; of matricide; of infanticide; of suicide, of

EVERY FORM OF MURDER.

In four hours on one evening in one city 36,803 women were seen going into public-houses! The results formed a tragedy so squalid, and so deadly, as to sicken the heart like the impressions of a nightmare, whose very memory we loathe. Read that hideous list, and then prattle, and lisp, and sneer about exaggeration; read that list, and then if any man can still quote Scripture for the purpose of checking temperance reforms, or of encouraging our immense capacities for delay and indifference, I can only say to such a man, that

"Though in the sacred place he stands,
Uplifting consecrated hands,
Unworthy are his lips to tell
Of J'rau's martyr miracle;
Thy miracle of life and death
Thou Holy One of Nazareth!"

And is all this to take place all over England always? It was so again last year; it has been so for many years: next year again, and the next, and the next, are we, in those two weeks of blessedness, to have the whole country, from John o' Groats to Land's End, deluged and disgraced by this filthy stream of blood, and misery, and crime? Is this to be the prerogative of our national morality; and are we to go on leaving these crimes, and the sources of them, and the temptations to them unchecked, till the pit swallow us and them?

I must end; but I must ask you not to suppose that I have brought before you one-half of the evil, or one-tenth of the motives which should stir us up to counteract it for Christ's sake, and in Christ's name.

I have not shown you, as I could most awfully show you, how, by introducing our accursed fire-waters, we have destroyed and exterminated whole races of mankind, until our footsteps round the world, instead of being "beautiful upon the mountains," have been as footsteps dyed in blood. I have not shown you the extent to which drink neutralises the work of the school, the library, and the Church, so that it is the very chief barrier against the efforts of religion.

Englishmen and Christians, if such facts do not stir you up, I ask, could they do so were they even in the thunder's mouth? It is not in the thunder, it is by the still small voice of history and experience, that God speaks to the reason and to the conscience. It is not by the lightning-flash that He would have us read His will, but

BY THE QUIET LIGHT

that shows all things in the slow history of their ripening. When He speaks in the thunder and the lightning, by the tornado and the earthquake, He speaks in retribution then. And what is retribution but the eternal law of consequences? If you cannot see God's warnings against drink, if you cannot read in the existing conditions of things His displeasure and our shame, if you cannot see it in the marriage-tie broken and dishonoured—in sons and daughters ruined—in the peace of families laid waste—in the work of the Church hindered—in whole districts blighted—in thousands and tens of thousands of souls destroyed—if you cannot see it in the records of crime, and murder, and outrage, and madness, and suicide; in the fathers who, in these very months, through drink, have slain