

Selections.

"ONLY THIS ONCE."

"Only this once;" the wine-cup glowed,
All sparkling with its ruby ray;
The bacchanalian welcome flowed,
And folly made the revel gay.

Then he, so long, so deeply warned,
The sway of conscience rashly spurned;
His promise of repentance scorned,
And coward-like, to vice returned.

"Only this once;"—the tale is told:
He wildly quaffed the poisonous tide:
With more than Esau's madness, sold
The birthright of his soul, and died.

I do not say that breath forsook
The clay, and left its pulses dead:
But reason in her empire shook,
And all the life of life was fled.

Again his eyes the landscape viewed;
His limbs again their burden bore;
And years their wonted course renewed;
But hope and peace returned no more.

Yes, angel hearts with pity wept,
When he whom Virtue fain would save,
His vow to her so falsely kept,
And madly sought a drunkard's grave.

"Only this once;"—BEWARE, BEWARE:
Gaze not upon the blushing wine;
Oh! fly temptation's siren snare,
And prayerful, seek for strength divine.
—Mrs. L. H. Sigourney.

THE CRUEL DRINK.

SPEECH BY COMMISSIONER KVA BOOTH
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HORTICULTURAL PAVILION
TORONTO.

Previous to any direct remarks relative to my address this afternoon, I must give way to the urging impulses of my whole being, and tend to every warm heart engaged in work of temperance, my warmest congratulations for the late achievements won in the question of prohibition.

The ring of this battle has resounded through every land and nation, and its surprising climax in a triumph so great, has called forth notes of praise and expressions of admiration from the whole world.

It has been a heavy conflict—a hand-to-hand fight! Into the fray has been thrown unsparing time, strength and energy, of some of our country's most cultured minds, finest intellects, and bravest hearts, which devotion so great, to a cause so noble God has crowned with a victory unique in the history of Christendom, which victory has arrested the agitated attention of our enemies—not so much because of the triumph scored, but more because its clear indication of the goal we intend to reach, and which, despite every obstacle—if I know Canada at all—Canada will reach.

VICTORY.

The General wrote me at the conclusion of the Plebiscite Campaign that he considered "the result in so great a majority in favor of prohibition was marvellous, as well as magnificent."

I replied, "Wait a bit! The day is not far ahead when Canada will drive without its gates these regiments of sorrow, crime and destruction which march in the armies of drink, chilling and killing as does the breath of eternal woe, and with its deluded captives delivered, will show to the whole world how profitable is the God-blest country, redeemed from this distilled damnation.

Now, I propose to divide my address this afternoon into three sections: (1) Drink's World, (2) Drink's work, and (3) Drink's Woe.

1. DRINK'S WORLD.

Its paths, inlaid with snare and ruin, run from the highest and most cultured places of our most enlightened lands, down through the darkest alleys of poverty and pauperism, and into the lowest vaults of infamy and vice. There is no thoroughfare so wide, no hut so desolate, no cave so hidden, no nation so fair, no strand so laden with disastrous wreck, but into which the heavy tread of this monster, Drink, with either the wail of destruction in its tramp, or with its venomous sting hidden by its deluding glare, has forced its funeral march.

It dwells in marble halls, the most gorgeous tapestry bedecks its chambers, the walls through which it glides are spacious and imposing; it is no

stranger to art of the most beautiful—skill, the most elaborate; the floors over which its stealthy feet glide are often marble, the ceilings of gilded fretwork, the frescoed walls upon which it casts its shadows are of mahogany and satinwood; its blazing gas-jets in globes of dainty hues hang from massive brackets; its ear is accustomed to the sweetest strains of most cultured music, into which it will only too surely introduce all the dirges of minor keys; its envious eye rests with ravishing greed upon the beautiful form of fairest creature, and most elegant spread of glorious nature, and most artistic skill displayed in picture, with thirst to cast its blight on all.

INFANTICIDE AND SUICIDE.

A lady, extravagantly dressed, holding by the hand a sweet little boy of some six years, also displaying all taste and plenty in his attire, accompanied by a nurse with a fair baby of six months in her arms, attended one of my more select meetings in the Old Country.

She seemed to take something of a fancy to me, and waited to speak to me at the conclusion of the meeting. I felt some affinity with her—perhaps it was the hidden sorrow of which I knew nothing, drew in an imperceptible way upon my sympathy. But we talked happily over a cup of tea, in the vestry; I kissed the children, prayed with them, and blessed them.

We met occasionally after this. I was to have gone to her home, but never found the time. She frequently sent the little boy to see me, and the only thing that impressed me strangely was when asking of his father, the nurse became very agitated, and would change the conversation. One night at the conclusion of a large meeting to my surprise, I found the nurse sitting in the lobby, with a face white as death. I asked why she did not come into the meeting, and enquired the reason of her being out with the boy at such a late hour; she burst into bitter wailing; I could get no response to my questions. Turning to the boy, I asked if his mother was sick. He replied, "No! Nurse cries because mother has gone away with baby."

Then the girl, burying her head in her hands said "Oh! my mistress has gone to jail!"

"To jail?" I grasped.
"Yes! she has killed the baby: she put laudanum in its milk by mistake—she was drunk."

A letter afterwards told me that the lady had committed suicide.

Yes! they fall as a star from the very heavens—to a cinder in hell.

IN HUMBLE HOMES.

But drink stays not there. It sits at the hearth of the humbler homes; it gazes with hideous smile upon the honest toil for bread; it creeps upstairs; it glitters on the table in the little festivities of the happy home, lurking behind the damnable argument of the harmlessness of moderate drinking, while with hungering designs it lays its plans with careful calculation as to the little time it will take to snatch the pretty blue frock from the little form, and the pretty pink flush from the little cheek, the good warm boots from the little feet, carpet from the floor, and the clock from the shelf; the gladness from the mother's eye, and the honor from the father's heart; the bread from the cupboard, and the fire from the grate.

IN THE SLUMS.

But drink stays not there! Through the courts and alleys its blood-besmeared feet hasten with a rapidity only lent to positive, absolute and complete destruction; down into the cellars; up into the garrets; hid away in sheds; in any and every hole that can shelter want and woe are to be found crawling, standing, sitting, leaning, kneeling, treading the slaves and victims of this dark passion—Drink! Their faces are drawn with agony; their reasons distorted with crime; their names are blighted with shame; their homes are gone; their characters are gone—all over the counter for beer, all into the hotel-keeper's till, all into the brewer's pocket.

EVERYWHERE.

But Drink stays not here. It is the shadow behind the garish foot-lights of the stage. It is the demon glare thrown into the brilliancy of the ball-room. It is the frenzied fascination of the gambling-table. Its playthings are the fair babes of our cradles; its merriment the tears of our winged

and bereaved; its sport the haunted consciences of wretched man, and the delirious wanderings of maddened minds; its nature the blood of its victims.

Its sky is blackened with the pall of death; its rivers a multitude of fallen tears; its atmosphere thickened with the wail of suffering. Drink is a dragon thirsting for human blood! It is a monster with a rabid lust for human life! It is a pestilence which paralyzes the will, bewilders the brain! It is a flame, scorching and withering all it touches! It is the most active, the most powerful, the most successful enemy of the soul, for it is not one sin, it is all! crushing the old, cursing the young and blighting even the children.

The Demon of Drink says with Napoleon: "Give me the children, and I will conquer the world."

2. DRINK'S WORK.

(a) It is gradual. Almost all drunkards were once moderate drinkers. There has never been known a man who has intended to be mastered by this power. The supposed harmlessness of the one glass has been the damnation of body and soul for a thousand times ten thousand men. Oh, this tasting of father's glass with the children, this having it in the cupboard, this countenancing and patronizing in part of what in whole is a world-wide traffic of destruction, has just been the lighting of the fires which have consumed three parts of earth's best and brightest.

SOPHISTRIES.

Of all arguments which to my mind are the most base in their gross distortions of natural reasons, their contradiction of all conscience dictates, and annihilation of all manly honor, are those which would plead in favor of drink in moderation, as though the fact of taking the death-drug in small quantities could change its nature—which nature is restless, untiring pursuit until all is devoured and destroyed.

Is Hell Heaven, because Hell
In little drops be given?

THE TIGHTENING GRASP.

Oh, the thousands of young men who start with no greater desire or intention than to be in the fashion—they take the first glass in the high-class hotels of the city, but they have linked hands with the monster; the grasps become tighter and tighter, until the touch of the friend is lost in the grip of the fiend. Listen! The clock strikes twelve! It is the death-knell of a soul; the gas-jets intermingle their lights with the bleared glare of the youth; the flush of his cheek is the breath of eternal woe. The saloon-keeper cuffs him, waking him from his drunken slumber, says it is time to close, throws him out—he's down—he's damned! He began a moderate drinker in a first-class hotel—he finishes his dissipation an inveterate drunkard in the lowest saloon.

Banish the drink both in small and great quantities! Banish it from your homes, from your children, from your wives, from your tables, from your cities, and, God helping you, from this our fair country.

FIVE YEAR'S WORK.

One of my officers was driving through one of the border streets in a city of the country.

Attention was drawn to a tall, slight figure on the sidewalk; a woman, who wore widow's weeds; her attire gave evidence of continual efforts to retain neatness. The skirt was brushed thread-bare, the boots were patched, the little bonnet was extremely worn.

The figure halted, gave a quick look round, then stooped and snatched from the gutter a crust—then another look round, and, holding up her shawl to prevent all possible detection, began to gnaw away at the frozen bread.

The officer drew up the rig and sprang to her side, saying, "You are hungry and in want, car, I help you?"

Story soon told. What a happy home, what a loving husband, what a beautiful baby all once. "My lover, my sweetheart, my husband, my protector, my supporter, and my baby all carried away by the drink, sir—in five short years."

A MOTHER'S VIEWS.

My honored and sainted mother, in her writings, speaks about the drink traffic.

"But not only is abstinence valuable, nay, indispensable, in order to preserve those rescued out of the power of this great destroyer, but it is equally

valuable to prevent others from falling into it.

"We all profess to believe that prevention is better than cure. Seeing, then, that strong drink is proved to be the most dangerous foe to perseverance in righteousness, and the most potent cause of declension, inconsistency and apostasy, ought not Christians to strive, both by example and precept, to warn the young, the weak, and the inexperienced from touching it?"

"Can any man answer for the consequences of putting a bottle to his neighbor's mouth—be it ever such a small one, or ever such a genteel one? God has recorded His curse against the man who does this, and thousands of hourly-haired parents, broken-hearted wives, and weeping, blighted children groan 'Amen' to the dreadful sentence.

"Perchance there are some men who can take these drinks in what they call moderation, and suffer no visible injury; nevertheless, let that man beware who touches that which God cursed, for there are injuries invisible more to be dreaded than all the plagues of Egypt!"

ONE INSTANCE.

(b) It is complete! I was just about ready to leave a city lately visited by me, when a lady, stepping from a carriage was ushered into my room. Her countenance was of exceptional beauty, her apparel was of costly worth, her speech denoted education and refinement; putting out her hand she said, "My apology for taking up your time, Miss Booth, was my anxiety to speak to the only woman that has ever made me cry, and this I did all through your address last night." A few minutes' talk revealed the reason of the hot tears referred to.

The story ran much on all those things which used to be—loving home, beautiful nursery, the mother's care, the gentle training, the happy marriage, and then—always having been a moderate drinker—drink in greater quantities was the only receipt for relief from the grief and unexpected sorrow. And with bated breath, and staring eye, she whispered, "It is the drink, Miss Booth! It has driven my husband from me, locked up my children in the convent, spent my fortune; it has shut the doors of my home, blasted my character, robbed my virtue—and now I am down past the reach of any man, and even God Himself." And she gathered her cloak around her, and scarcely before I could speak she said, "I must go; you may tell my story to as many as you like—it may save some other creature who is as fair as I once was fair, from becoming as black as I now am black."

A FINISHED WORK.

I say the work of drink is complete. It not only throws overboard every enjoyable feature of circumstances—running with the library and instruments to the pawnbroker, but what is so much more to be prized—it strips the subject himself of his priceless treasure—puts its hand down on reason and turns it to imbecility—puts its hand down on honor—honor with which none can part without bitter agony—and turns it to shame; puts its hand down on truth and turns it to craft and falsehood; puts its hand down on beauty and so mars, scars, tears, and hacks until no trace of loveliness can be found.

It stays not at taking the bloom from the cheek, but goes on until the death breezes fan it; it stays not at bent back, round shoulders and curved spine, fractured limbs, but goes on until it lays the body in the grave.

Complete in its ruin of body, soul and mind.

DRUNKEN MOTHERHOOD.

I knew of a garret absolutely empty but for the suffering form of a drunken woman and a few rags.

The birth of the baby boy that morning brought with it no maternal affection, but only the fervent prayer that it would die; not a rag was prepared for the unwelcome mite; its first bath was in the boiler, and its first covering part of an old garment torn from the back of his little sister—however, the poor little babe persisted in living, in spite of these unwelcome circumstances, and nine days afterwards appeared with its mother in the county court. The fact of the matter was, that all the furniture had gone to meet the infuriated demands of the unpaid landlord, but did not nearly satisfy the amount due.

"How can you pay this account?" asked the judge of the woman. Diving her hands underneath the tattered