

goeth down smoothly. (Rev. Ver.) The warning against the pleasure of sight now passes over to warning against the pleasure of taste. Both must be eschewed if one is to avoid falling under the power of this sin.

III. Excellent Reasons, 32-35.

V. 32. The warning is enforced by a consideration of the consequences. *At the last it biteth like a serpent.* At first the liquor may seem pleasantly attractive, but there is a sequel. When the habit becomes fixed, evil results appear like the working of serpent poison in the blood. (Num. 21 : 6.) *And stingeth like an adder.* "The *cerastes*, or horned snake, thought to be the 'adder' here referred to is exceedingly venomous. It lurks in the sand, coiled up, perhaps, in a camel's footprint, ready to dart at any passing animal."

V. 33. The excited condition of the drunkard's mind is next described. *Thine eyes shall behold strange women,* "strange things" (Rev. Ver.). In consequence of the fever caused by intoxication, the most fantastic visions float before the mind of the drunkard, and in delirium he trembles at horrors of various kinds. Nor is the idea of the unbridling of passion expressed in the Authorized Version altogether absent. *Thine heart shall utter perverse things.* The distortion of the drunkard's thoughts produces speech of the same character, so that the stage may be reached where he may become a raving madman for a time.

V. 34. As the previous verse refers to the

mental condition of the inebriate, this one calls attention to his physical state. *As he that lieth down in the midst of the sea.* Sick, reeling, helpless, and utterly unconscious of peril, he is likened to one who would lie down on the bosom of the sea or make a bed for himself in its depths. *Or he that lieth upon the top of a mast.* No one could lie down on a sail-yard at the top of a swaying mast without imminent peril of being at any moment crushed by falling to the deck or of being cast with great force into the sea; so the inebriate is exposed to the most serious dangers of all kinds, but all the while is unable to take care of himself, and may lose his life at any moment.

V. 35. A picture is now given of the inebriate as he rises from his debauch, and awakes from his stupor. *They have stricken me . . . and I was not sick.* He has been beaten, he thinks, but did not feel the effects at the time. His mental derangement rendered him insensible to pain. Now he feels the effects of injury. *When shall I awake?* Though forced to sleep off the results of his debauch, he is vividly represented as yearning to be up and back at his cups again, because the life of revelry has become his delight. This last stroke completes the picture. The victim of this evil habit has suffered humiliation, torture, wounding, but he cannot cease his indulgence. A slave to his past, "tormented by a burning appetite," he seeks relief in that which must involve him in deeper misery and woe.

APPLICATION

Who hath woe? . . . They that tarry long at the wine, v. 29. Said that celebrated physician, Sir Andrew Clark, "I do not desire to make out a strong case, I desire to make out a true case. I am speaking solemnly and carefully in the presence of truth, and I tell you I am considerably within the mark when I say to you that going the round of my hospital wards to-day, seven out of every ten there owe their ill-health to alcohol. The sum total of the actual suffering, in body and mind and of the loss of time and strength and property through the use of drink, in

even any little village is appalling. Nay, measure it in the case of some one household or some one individual, and you wonder that any are such fools as to drink, or any so inhuman as to encourage it—nay, that all are not set to fight it as they would fight the plague.

At the last it biteth, v. 32. It is the deceitfulness of drink—and is not this true of all temptation?—that gives it its strongest hold. Nothing can be merrier than the red wine and the flowing cup. It seems to hold within it the very spirit of laughter and good fellow-