

THY BOTTLE!

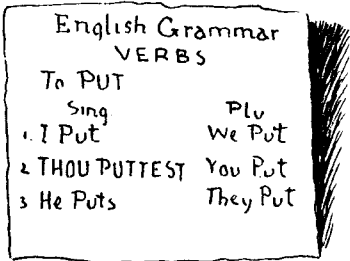
FROM A SKETCH BY JOHN WOOLLEY.

With cuts by J. W. Bengough.

"WOE unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him and maketh him drunken also."—Hab. 2. 15.

This text is a double star in a constellation of curses. It is a royal text for Christian citizenship, touching "the drink." The first clause reads, "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink!" to that we all say amen! But wait—read on! "that putteth thy bottle to him."

What about "thy bottle?" That is what it says—not "a" bottle, nor "his" bottle,



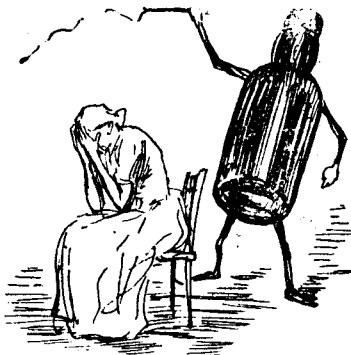
but "thy." You say, "Certainly, any bottle, no matter whose—the woe is in the putting." But wait, I think you will see it makes a frightful difference. Whose bottle?

Notice the verb "putteth." Verbs must agree with their substantives in person and number. If the woe were only to "him"

—the other man, the dramseller,—the verb would be "putteth." On the other hand, if the woe were only for the owner—the "thy" of the text—"him" would not have been put for the subject of the sentence. Yet it is; but "putteth" agrees with thou "thou." The curse is joint and several, to cover him who puts the bottle to his neighbour's lips, and his silent partner who has a right of property or authority in the bottle. Have you a bottle? Is there a bottle on your sideboard? No!

you thunder—your house is not a drinking place. Amen! but wait.

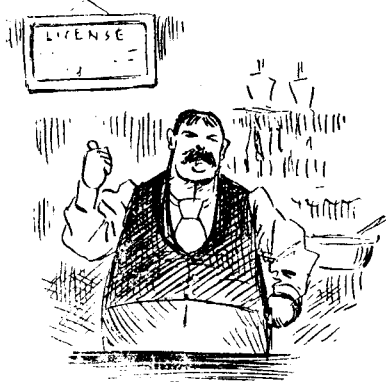
Here is a saloon, gilded, glazed, embossed, polished and fairly phosphorescent,



in your eye and mine, with hell-light. Let us enter and inquire. You hesitate? Come in. "Let the drink alone and it will not hurt you," they say. It did not work so with my mother. She let it alone, but it whipped the last years of her life into one great wave of pain. My wife was an exception, too. She never touched it, but in the very flush and pride of her young womanhood, it crushed her to the very dust with everlasting heartaches.

Whose is this saloon? we asked a bartender. He looks us over shrewdly—fine judges of human nature, these men—knows at a glance that we mean mischief, and his eyes wander without a word to the framed certificate on the wall. It is a diploma from the Government showing John Smith to have been graduated from the college of restriction, and expressly authorizing him, for that reason, to put the bottle to his neighbour's lips.

So it seems John Smith conducts the place. He actually, or by his agents, puts



the bottle. But why is this license so carefully provided? Why, do you not see? It is the theory of our government that the only right to put the bottle to a citizen's lips inheres in the sovereignty, and the Province has delegated its alcoholic sovereignty to the city, and it in turn to John Smith, for without leave of the city to do this thing, John Smith would be plain John Smith, and of no more consequence than a clergyman or a merchant of honest wares. He is knighted, as it were—Sir John Smith, dramseller to their sovereign majesties, the People. Are you in that?

I want you to remember that a saloon is as national and as lawful as a public school. I seem to see upon the face or the rags of



every drunken man, a legend like you sometimes see on packages of whiskey or tobacco: "Take notice, the manufacture of this article has complied with all the requirements of the law, according to the statute in such case made and provided."

Now, in this gross sum that men call "sovereignty," what are you? A digit or a dot? You'll say: "A digit, by the grace of God, and a Christian man." Amen! But wait.

Suppose you are remotely interested in this thing! What of it? Listen: If by your consent—express or tacit—your taxes are diminished by the shame-gold of license laws, I say that in the sight of God there's blood on every dollar you own.

I am talking to men who acknowledge the binding authority of the Bible, and



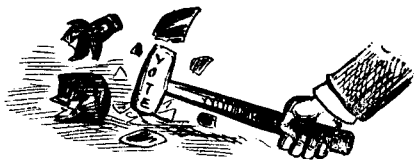
especially such as feel constrained to do temperance work. If you have a bottle anywhere, don't try to help intemperate men. The hand that holds a bottle cannot lift helpfully on fallen men. The heart

that consents to a bottle cannot feel helpfully for fallen men.

Men say to me: "What we need is a great revival of religion;" but I tell you there will never be a great revival in this country till Christian men repent in sackcloth and ashes for their part in the liquor traffic under license-laws.

Break the public bottle? You can't? You've never tried. You have tried to keep it corked on Sunday and election-day. You have tried to keep it from drunkards, from boys, and from Indians; but the drunkard was drunk yesterday, is drunk to-day, and will be drunk to-morrow; and for every drunkard that drops down, a boy starts in to fill the gap.

How do you break the people's bottle? You vote to break it. The ballot is the freeman's little blast, set in the rock of error, honeycombing it by slow and often imperceptible degrees. But, if it seems hopeless, what is your duty? Simply to wash your hands of the saloon. Four words answer all arguments. "We must be politic." Says one: "Not with my bottle!" "They will have it!" "Not from my bottle." "It will always be drunk!" "Not from my bottle!" "It will be sold on the sly!" "Not from my bottle."



I am not bound to abolish the saloon, but only my interest in it. I'll vote my fraction of the Plebiscite right, and I'll carry my share of it for Prohibition. I am not bound to be successful; but I am bound to be true. A square man is never wrong side up! "My vote won't count." Listen! "Abraham believed God, and it was counted." The drink curse may go on piling up woe in this country, but

"NOT FROM MY BOTTLE!"

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