

THE ABSTAINER.

ORGAN OF THE GRAND DIVISION OF THE
SONS OF TEMPERANCE OF NOVA SCOTIA.

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Essays, &c.

SINS, SORROWS AND DUTIES

We are indebted to the *Alliance Weekly News* for the following extracts from Dr Guthrie's sermons on "the City; its Sins and its Sorrows":—

After stating strongly that the subject of drunkenness is one for the pulpit, this eloquent preacher uses his high prerogative to describe the sorrows of the city which this vice creates.

THE TRADE.

Oh, if that is a frightful vice which eats like a cancer into a woman's breast, that is a frightful trade which, fungus-like, lives upon the corruption of human nature—the decay of our noblest faculties, the death of our best affections. He is, for himself, a wretched fool, who builds up a fortune out of sin and misery. One blow of death's hand will shatter it, and what will he do when he has to confront all those who accuse him of their ruin—when he stands at the bar of God as ragged and naked as that wretched woman whom first a villain spoiled of her virtue and threw her away, and next he plunders of her shame and money,—casting her forth upon the cold, hard street?

THE SIN OF GOVERNMENT.

It is neither my pleasure nor my part to speak "evil of dignities," but having regard only to the interests of truth, of humanity, of God's glory and man's good, I will be bold to say, that unless those into whose hands we have committed the affairs of our country cease to swell the revenues of the state out of the vices of the people, and promptly apply every possible cure to those crying evils, they will peril the existence and betray the best interests of our empire.

DESIRABLE EXTENSION OF FORBES MACKENZIE'S BILL.

We have cause to thank God for that act of parliament by which, in answer to the voice of an all but unanimous people, the drinking-shops of Scotland were closed, and all traffic in intoxicating liquors pronounced illegal, from Saturday night till Monday morning.—We give God thanks for that. What we gained we intend to keep. What we won, we shall resolutely defend. We have no intention of retreating. On the contrary, we desire to see the law of the Sabbath extended to every day of the week, and all shops open for the mere purposes of drinking shut—shut up, as a curse to the community—as carrying on a trade, not less than the opium shops of

China, incurably pernicious. The evil, which cannot be cured, condemns itself to death.

THE DOINGS OF DRINK.

But it has done worse things than break the staff of bread, lower rank, wreck fortunes, and crown wealth with thorns. Most accursed vice! What hopes so precious that it has not withered, what career so promising that it has not arrested, what heart so tender, what temper so fine that it has not destroyed? what things so noble and sacred that it has not blasted? Touched by its hell-fire flame the laurel crown has been changed into ashes on the head of mourning genius, and the wings of the poet scorched by it; he who once played in the light of sunbeams, and soared aloft in the skies, has basely crawled into the dust. Paralyzing the mind even more than the body, it has turned the noblest intellect into drivelling idioty. Not awed by dignity, it has polluted the orme of the judge. Not scared away by the sanctity of the temple, it has defiled the pulpit. In all these particulars I speak what I know. I have seen it cover with a cloud, or expose to depositions from the office and honours of the holy ministry no fewer than ten clergymen, with some of whom I have sat down at the table of the Lord, and all of whom I numbered in the rank of acquaintances and friends.

A MINISTER AT THE BAR.

Once a year indeed when church courts meet, our city may present a spectacle which fools regard with indifference, but wise men with compassion and fear. A pale and haggard man, bearing the title of "Reverend," stands at the bar of his church. Not daring to look up, he bends there with his head buried in his hands, blushes on his face, his lips quiver, and a hell raging, burning within him, as he thinks of home, a broken-hearted wife, and the little ones so soon to leave that dear sweet home, to shelter their innocent heads where best, all beggared and disgraced, they may. Oh, my brother there! and oh, my brother here, learn to watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation. See there the issue of all a mother's anxieties and a father's self-denying and parsimonious toil, to educate their promising, studious boy. In this deep darkness has set for ever a brilliant college career. Alas! what an end to the solemn day of ordination and the bright day of marriage, and all those Sabbaths when an affectionate people hung on his eloquent lips! Oh! if this sacred office, if the constant handling of things divine, if hours of study spent over the word of God, if frequent scenes of death, with their most awful and sobering solemnities, if the irremediable ruin into which degradation from the holy office

plunges a man and his house along with him, if the unspeakable heinousness of this sin in one who held the post of a sentinel and was charged with the care of souls—if these do not fortify and fence us against excess, then, in the name of God, "let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." You are confident in your strength, so was he. You can use without abusing, so once could he.—I tell you I have seen ministers of the gospel charged by fame, dragged to the bar of their church, and degraded before the world as drunkards, whom once I would have as little expected to fall as I expect some of you—as you believe it possible that this vice shall yet degrade me from the pulpit, and cause my children to blush at mention of their father's name. Such cases are trumpet-tongued.—Their voice sounds the loudest warning. In such a fall we hear the crash of a stately tree. Leave an ungodly world—deaf, stone-deaf to the voice of Providence—to quaff their cups, and make the fall of ministers "the song of the drunkards," leave them to say that all religion is hypocrisy, and see in such cases but the dropping of a mask from falsehood's face. Let that which emboldens them in sin teach you to stand in awe. For it seems to me as if, disturbed in his grave by the shock of such an event, the old prophet, wrapped like Samuel in his mantle-shroud, had left the dead to cry in the ears of all the living, who regard with indifference the fall of a minister, "Howl, fir-trees, for the cedar is fallen!"

THE LEGISLATURE MAY RENDER ESSENTIAL SERVICE IN THIS CAUSE.

"How would thousands hail and bless the day which, shutting up the drinking-shops, would preserve them from temptations which are their ruin, and to which they at length passively yield themselves; although, as one said, they know their doors to be the way to hell. Yet not passively, until this fatal pleasure has paralysed the mind more even than the body. Many struggle hard to overcome this passion. There is a long and terrible fight between the man and the serpent that has him in his coils; between the love of wife and children and the love of drink. Never more manfully than some of them did swimmer struggle in his hour of agony—breasting the waves and straining every nerve to reach the distant shore. Would parliament but leave this matter to these people themselves would they for once delegate their powers of legislation to the inhabitants of our lowest districts—we are confident that, by their all but unanimous vote, every drinking-shop in their neighbourhoods would be shut up. The birds, which are now drawn into the mouth of the serpent, would soar aloft on free and joyous wing to sing the praises of the hand that