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VOL. XXV. ELIZABETH CITY, N. C., FRIDAY, MAY 28, 1897. NO 40.

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THE BAG WITH HOLES

DR. TALMAGE'S SERMON ON IMPROVIDENCE AND ALCOHOLISM.

The Greatest Enemy of the People Who Work—Drink the Anarchist of the Centuries—A Plea For Christian Prudence. Christ as an Aid Against Temptation.

WASHINGTON, May 23.—This sermon of Dr. Talmage is an arraignment of improvidence in all classes, and of alcoholism as the greatest enemy of the working people. The text is Haggai i, 6, "He that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes."

In Persia, under the reign of Darius Hystaspes, the people did not prosper. They made money, but did not keep it. They were like people who have a sack in which they put money, not knowing that the sack is torn or eaten of moths, or in some way made incapable of holding valuables. As fast as the coin was put in one end of the sack it dropped out of the other. It made no difference how much wages they got, for they lost them. "He that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes."

What has become of the billions and billions of dollars in this country paid to the working classes? Some of these moneys have gone for house rent, or the purchase of homesteads, or wardrobe, or family expenses, or the necessities of life, or to provide comforts in old age. What has become of other billions? Wasted in foolish outlay. Wasted at the gaming table. Wasted in intoxicants. Put into a bag with 100 holes.

Gather up the money that the working classes have spent for drink during the last 30 years, and I will build for every workingman a house and lay out for him a garden, and clothe his sons in broadcloth and his daughters in silks, and place at his front door a prancing span of sorrels or bays, and secure him a policy of life insurance, so that the present home may be well maintained after he is dead. The most persistent, most overpowering enemy of the working classes is intoxicating liquor. It is the anarchist of the centuries and has boycotted and is now boycotting the body and mind and soul of American labor. It is to it a worse foe than monopoly and worse than associated capital.

A Strike Against Strong Drink.

It annually swindles industry out of a large percentage of its earnings. It holds out its blasting solicitations to the mechanic or operative on his way to work, and at the noon spell, and on his way home at eventide; on Saturday, when the wages are paid, it snatches a large part of the money that might come into the family and sacrifices it among the saloon keepers. Stand the saloons of this country side by side, and it is carefully estimated that they would reach from New York to Chicago. "Forward, march," says the drink power, "and take possession of the American nation."

The drink business is pouring its vitriolic and damnable liquids down the throats of hundreds of thousands of laborers, and while the ordinary strikes are ruinous both to employers and employees I proclaim a strike universal against strong drink, which, if kept up, will be the relief of the working classes and the salvation of the nation. I will undertake to say that there is not a healthy laborer in the United States who within the next ten years, if he will refuse all intoxicating beverages and be saving, may not become a capitalist on a small scale. Our country in a year spends $1,500,050,000 for drink. Of course the working classes do a great deal of this expenditure. Careful statistics show that the wage earning classes of Great Britain expend in liquors £100,000,000, or $500,000,000 a year. Sit down and calculate, oh, workingman, how much you have expended in these directions. Add it all up. Add up what your neighbors have expended and realize that instead of answering the beck of other people you might have been your own capitalist. When you deplete a workingman's physical energy, you deplete his capital. The stimulated workman gives out before the unstimulated workman. My father said: "I became a temperance man in early life, because I noticed in the harvest field that though I was physically weaker than other workmen, I could hold out longer than they. They took stumulants, I took none." A brickmaker in England gives his experience in regard to this matter among men in his employ. He says, after investigation: "The beer drinker who made the fewest bricks made 659,000, and the abstainer who made the fewest bricks 746,000. The difference in behalf of the abstainer over the indulger, 87,000."

The False Strength of Liquor.

When an army goes out to the battle, the soldier who has water or coffee in his canteen marches easier and fights better than the soldier who has whisky in his canteen. Drink helps a man to fight when he has only one contestant, and that at the street corner, but when he goes forth to maintain some great battle for God and his country, he wants no drink about him. When the Russians go to war, a corporal passes along the line and smells the breath of every soldier. If there be in his breath a taint of intoxicating liquor, the man is sent back to the barracks. Why? He cannot endure fatigue. All our young men know this. When they are preparing for a regatta or for a ball club or for an athletic wrestling, they abstain. Our working people will be wiser after awhile, and the money they fling away on hurtful indulgences they will put into co-operative association, and so become capitalists. If the workingman puts down his wages and then takes his expenses and spreads them out so they will just equal, he is not wise. I know workingmen who are in a perfect fidget until they get rid of their last dollar.

The following circumstances came under our observation: A young man worked hard to earn his $600 or $700 yearly. Marriage day came. The bride had inherited $500 from her grandfather. She spent every dollar of it on the wedding dress. Then they rented two rooms in a third story. Then the young man took extra evening employment—almost exhausted with the day's work, yet took evening employment. It almost extinguished his eyesight. Why did he add evening employment to the day employment? To get money. Why did he want to get money? To lay up something for a rainy day? No. To get his life insured, so that in case of his death his wife would not be a beggar? No. He put the extra evening work to the day work that he might get $150 to get his wife a sealskin coat. The sister of the bride heard of this achievement, and was not to be eclipsed. She was very poor, and she sat up working nearly all the night for a great while until she bought a sealskin coat. I have not heard of the result on that street. The street was full of those who are on small incomes, but I suppose the contagion spread and that everybody had a sealskin coat and that the people came out and cried, practically, not literally, "Though the heavens fall, we must have a sealskin coat."

The Recklessly Improvident.

I was out west, and a minister of the gospel told me in Iowa that his church and the neighborhood had been impoverished by the fact that they put mortgages on their farms in order to send their families to the Philadelphia centennial. It was not respectable not to go to the centennial. Between such evils and pauperism there is a very short step. The vast majority of children in your almshouses are there because their parents are drunken, lazy or recklessly improvident.

I have no sympathy for skinflint saving, but I plead for Christian prudence. You say it is impossible now to lay up anything for a rainy day. I know it, but we are at the daybreak of national prosperity. Some people think it is mean to turn the gas low when they go out of the parlor. They feel embarrassed if the doorbell rings before they have the hall lighted. They apologize for the plain meal, if you surprise them at the table. Well, it is mean if it is only to pile up a miserly hoard. But if it be to educate your children, if it be to give more help to your wife when she does not feel strong, if it be to keep your funeral day from being horrible beyond all endurance, because it is to be the disruption and annihilation of the domestic circle—if it be for that, then it is magnificent.

There are those who are kept in poverty because of their own fault. They might have been well off, but they smoked or chewed up their earnings, or they lived beyond their means, while others on the same wages and on the same salaries went on to competency. I know a man who is all the time complaining of his poverty and crying out against rich men while he himself keeps two dogs and chews and smokes and is full to the chin with whisky and beer. Wilkins Micawber said to David Copperfield: "Copperfield, my boy, £1 income, expenses 20s. 6d.; result, misery. But, Copperfield, my boy, £1 income; expenses, 19s. 6d.; result, happiness." But, O workingman, take your morning dram, and your noon dram, and your evening dram, and spend everything you have over for tobacco and excursions, and you insure poverty for yourself and your children forever!

More Holes In the Bag.

If by some generous flat of the capitalists of this country or by a new law of the government of the United States 25 per cent or 50 per cent or 100 per cent were added to the wages of the working classes of America, it would be no advantage to hundreds of thousands of them unless they stopped strong drink. Aye, until they quit that evil habit the more money the more ruin, the more wages the more holes in the bag.

My plea is to those working people who are in a discipleship to the whisky bottle, the beer jug and the wine flask. And what I say to them will not be more appropriate to the working classes than to the business classes and the literary classes and the professional classes and all classes, and not with the people of one age more than of all ages. Take one good square look at the suffering of the man whom strong drink has enthralled and remember that toward that goal multitudes are running. The disciple of alcoholism suffers the loss of self respect. Just as soon as a man wakes up and finds that he is the captive of strong drink, he feels demeaned. I do not care how recklessly he acts. He may say, "I don't care;" he does care. He cannot look a pure man in the eye unless it is with positive force of resolution. Three-fourths of his nature is destroyed; his self respect is gone; he says things he would not otherwise say; he does things he would not otherwise do. When a man is nine-tenths gone with strong drink, the first thing he wants to do is to persuade you that he can stop any time he wants to. He cannot. The Philistines have bound him hand and foot, and shorn his locks, and put out his eyes, and are making him grind in the mill of a great horror. He cannot stop. I will prove it. He knows that his course is bringing ruin upon himself. He loves himself. If he could stop, he would. He knows his course is bringing ruin upon his family. He loves them. He would stop if he could. He cannot. Perhaps he could three months or a year ago; not now. Just ask him to stop for a month. He cannot—he knows he cannot, so he does not try.

Killed by Drink.

I had a friend who was for 15 years going down under this evil habit. He had large means. He had given thousands of dollars to Bible societies and reformatory institutions of all sorts. He was very genial, very generous and very lovable, and whenever he talked about this evil habit he would say, "I can stop any time." But he kept going on, going on, down, down, down. His family would say, "I wish you would stop." "Why," he would reply, "I can stop any time, if I want to." After awhile he had delirium tremens—he had it twice, and yet after that he said, "I could stop at any time, if I wanted to." He is dead now. What killed him? Drink! Drink! And yet among his last utterances was, "I can stop at any time." He did not stop it because he could not stop it. Oh, there is a point in inebriation beyond which if a man goes he cannot stop! One of these victims said to a Christian man, "Sir, if I were told that I couldn't get a drink until tomorrow night unless I had all my fingers cut off, I would say, 'Bring the hatchet and cut them off now.'" I have a dear friend in Philadelphia whose nephew came to him one day, and when he was exhorted about his evil habit said: "Uncle, I can't give it up. If there stood a cannon and it was loaded, and a glass of wine were set on the mouth of that cannon, and I knew that you would fire it off just as I came up and took the glass, I would start, for I must have it." Oh, it is a sad thing for a man to wake up in this life and feel that he is a captive! He says: "I could have got rid of this once, but I can't now. I might have lived an honorable life and died a Christian death, but there is no hope for me now. There is no escape for me. Dead, but not buried. I am a walking corpse. I am an apparition of what I once was. I am a caged immortal beating against the wires of my cage in this direction—beating against the cage until there is blood on the wires and blood upon my soul, yet not able to get out. Destroyed without remedy!"

The Drunkard's Suffering.

I go on and say that the disciple of rum suffers from the loss of health. The older men may remember that some years ago Dr. Sewell went through this country and electrified the people by his lectures, in which he showed the effects of alcoholism on the human stomach. He had seven or eight diagrams by which he showed the devastation of strong drink upon the physical system. There were thousands of people who turned back from that ulcerous sketch, swearing eternal abstinence from everything that could intoxicate.

God only knows what the drunkard suffers. Pain files on every nerve, and travels every muscle, and gnaws every bone, and burns with every flame, and stings with every poison, and pulls at him with every torture. What reptiles crawl over his sleeping limbs. What fiends stand by his midnight pillow. What groans tear his ear. What horrors shiver through his soul. Talk of the rack, talk of the inquisition, talk of the funeral pyre, talk of the crushing Juggernaut—he feels them all at once. Have you ever been in the ward of the hospital where these inebriates are dying, the stench of their wounds driving back the attendants, their voices sounding through the night? The keeper comes up and says: "Hush, now be still. Stop making all this noise." But it is effectual only for a moment, for as soon as the keeper is gone they begin again: "O God! O God! Help! Help! Drink! Give me drink! Help! Take them off me! Take them off me! O God!" And then they shriek, and they rave, and they pluck out their hair by handfuls and bite their nails into the quick, and then they groan, and they shriek, and they blaspheme, and they ask the keepers to kill them—"Stab me! Smother me! Strangle me! Take the devils off me!" Oh, it is no fancy sketch. That thing is going on now all up and down the land, and I tell you further that this is going to be the death that some of you will die. I know it. I see it coming.

A Destroyer of the Home.

Again the inebriate suffers through the loss of home. I do not care how much he loves his wife and children, if this passion for strong drink has mastered him he will do the most outrageous things, and if he could not get drink in any other way he would sell his family into eternal bondage. How many homes have been broken up in that way no one but God knows. Oh, is there anything that will so destroy a man for this life and damn him for the life that is to come? Do not tell me that a man can be happy when he knows that he is breaking his wife's heart and clothing his children with rags. Why, there are on the roads and streets of this land today little children, barefooted, unwashed and unkempt, want on every patch of their faded dress and on every wrinkle of their prematurely old countenances, who would have been in churches today and as well clad as you are but for the fact that rum destroyed their parents and drove them into the grave. Oh, rum, thou foe of God, thou despoiler of homes, thou recruiting officer of the pit, I hate thee.

But my subject takes a deeper tone, and that is that the unfortunate of whom I speak suffers from the loss of the soul. The Bible intimates that in the future world, if we are unforgiven here, our bad passions and appetites, unrestrained, will go along with us and make our torment there. So that, I suppose, when an inebriate wakes up in that world he will feel an infinite thirst consuming him. Now, down in this world, although he may have been very poor, he could beg or he could steal 5 cents with which to get that which would slake his thirst for a little while, but in eternity where is the rum to come from?

Oh, the deep, exhausting, exasperating, everlasting thirst of the drunkard in hell! Why, if a fiend came up to earth for some infernal work in a grogshop and should go back taking on its wing just one drop of that for which the inebriate in the lost world longs, what excitement would it make there! Put that one drop from off the fiend's wing on the tip of the tongue of the destroyed inebriate, let the liquid brightness just touch it, let the drop be very small, if it only have in it the smack of alcoholic drink; let that drop just touch the lost inebriate in the lost world, and he would spring to his feet and cry: "That is rum, aha! That is rum!" And it would wake up the echoes of the damned: "Give me rum! Give me rum! Give me rum!" In the future world I do not believe that it will be the absence of God that will make the drunkard's sorrow. I do not believe it will be the absence of light. I do not believe that it will be the absence of holiness. I think it will be the absence of rum. Oh, "Look not upon the wine when it is red, when it moveth itself aright in the cup, for at the last it biteth like a serpent, and it stingeth like an adder."

The Help of God's Grace.

While I declared some time ago that there was a point beyond which a man could not stop, I want to tell you that, while a man cannot stop in his own strength, the Lord God by his grace can help him to stop at any time. I was in a room in New York where there were many men who had been reclaimed from drunkenness. I heard their testimony, and for the first time in my life there flashed out a truth I never understood. They said: "We were victims of strong drink. We tried to give it up, but always failed, but somehow since we gave our hearts to Christ he has taken care of us." I believe that the time will soon come when the grace of God will show its power not only to save man's soul, but his body and reconstruct, purify, elevate and redeem it.

I verily believe that although you feel grappling at the roots of your tongues an almost omnipotent thirst, if you will give your heart to God, he will help you by his grace to conquer. Try it. It is your last chance. I have looked oft upon the desolation. Sitting next to you in our religious assemblages there are a good many people in awful peril, and judging from ordinary circumstances there is not one chance in five thousand that they will get clear of it. There are men in every congregation from Sabbath to Sabbath of whom I must make the remark that if they do not change their course within ten years they will, as to their bodies, lie down in drunkards' graves, and as to their souls, lie down in a drunkard's perdition. I know that is an awful thing to say, but I cannot help saying it.

Darkness Forever.

Oh, beware! You have not yet been captured. Beware! Whether the beverage be poured in golden chalice or pewter mug, in the foam at the top, in white letters, let there be spelled out to your soul, "Beware!" When the books of judgment are open, and 10,000,000 drunkards come up to get their doom, I want you to bear witness that I, in the fear of God and in the love for your soul, told you, with all affection and with all kindness, to beware of that which has already exerted its influence upon your family, blowing out some of its lights—a premonition of the blackness of darkness forever.

Oh, if you could only hear intemperance with drunkards' bones drumming on the head of the liquor cask the dead march of immortal souls, methinks the very glance of a wine cup would make you shudder, and the color of the liquor would make you think of the blood of the soul, and the foam on the top of the cup would remind you of the froth on the maniac's lip, and you would kneel down and pray God that, rather than your children should become captives of this evil habit, you would like to carry them out some bright spring day to the cemetery and put them away to the last sleep, until at the call of the south wind the flowers would come up all over the grave—sweet prophecies of the resurrection. God has a balm for such a wound, but what flower of comfort ever grew on a drunkard's sepulcher?

Making Birch Oil.

Connecticut farmers have found a comfortable side profit in gathering the twigs, branches and saplings of black birch for the birch oil distilleries. By protecting the young growth crops are quickly raised. The birch brush has brought from $1.50 to $3 a ton. The birch oil has sold at $5 to $8 a pound, but is now less. One ton of birch yields four pounds of oil. Farmers can make the oil themselves. The distillery may be any rough building and the machinery is inexpensive. The birch twigs, not over two inches in diameter, are cut in lengths of five inches and thrown into water tight tanks with copper bottoms, in which are coils of steam pipes. Three feet of water is poured in, the tanks are hermetically sealed, and steam is turned into the pipes. The water is kept boiling six hours, and the steam, rising, passes into a pipe which runs in the form of a worm into a barrel of cold water constantly renewed. The steam is condensed in the worm, and the oil drips from the end of the pipe into a pail. It was formerly clarified from a dull brown to a light green after this process. Now this is done by spreading a heavy woolen blanket over the birchwood inside the tank, and the oil drips out pure and ready for market.—Chicago Journal.

A New Want.

"Well," said Mrs. Wiffles to the tramp, "I suppose you want something to eat this morning?"

"No, kind lady," replied the wayfarer; "I called to see if you had a cast off bicycle to give a deserving man."—Pick Me Up.

KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN!

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TO LOVELY WOMAN.

Oh, not the cycle, lady fair!
Those slender hands and dainty feet
Were made for man's delight, despair,
And not for whirling down the street
On iron wheel.

Oh, not the cycle, for I swear
That dainty form was never made
To brave the bold and eyeglass'd stare,
In bloomer costume undismay'd,
Upon bare steel!

Oh, not the cycle, whirling mad,
The rude, rough rush of spinning frame,
The manlike swagger, senseless, sad,
That sits uneasy on each dame
Who wheeling goes!

Oh, not the cycle, for I love
To dream you still my queen divine!
So insecure you loom above,
I feel your fall, perhaps on spine,
Perchance on nose.

Oh, not the cycle! In this age,
Invention mad and lost to grace,
Oh, still preserve your skin from scrape,
Preserve untouched your lovely face
And perfect form!
—New York Tribune.

CUSTOMS DUTIES.

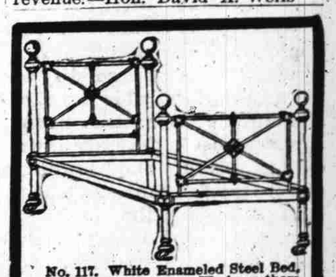
A Comparison Between the Ad Valorem and Specific Systems.

The ad valorem system proportions duties to the worth of the goods at the place of shipment at so much per cent of their market value. Its chief merit is its justice and equity. It adjusts itself automatically to differences of valuation or of commercial qualities, so that the tax collected from the consumer varies in proportion to his ability to pay—at least so far as this may be determined by his ability to buy goods of greater or less cost.

The chief demerit commonly ascribed to it is the temptation which it is said to offer to fraudulent undervaluation. Since the duty to be paid depends upon the foreign value, if this can be made to appear less than it really is, some part of the tax is evaded and the cost of the goods to the importer diminished. The difficulty of evading a customs revenue under a good and intelligent administration through undervaluation is illustrated by the circumstance that, in order to secure a saving of as much as 6 per cent on the landed cost of goods, the dishonest importer in the case of a 40 per cent duty would have to swear an undervaluation of more than 20 per cent.

On the other hand, the great advantage of a simple specific duty is the care and certainty with which it may be applied. If, for instance, the duty upon a class of textile fabrics should be fixed at 40 cents a pound, including all accessories involved in packing, the weight of the contents of a case would show, by simple multiplication, the exact amount of duty to be paid. No expensive process of examination need be entered upon. Disputes can hardly arise, and false swearing is out of the question. Such duties have been found most useful when imposed upon simple articles not produced in widely varying grades of greatly differing commercial values.

The injustice and inexpediency of specific duties are that they bear so much less heavily upon the high priced than upon the low priced qualities of goods, that the poorer classes of the community are taxed at a much higher rate than the richer. Neither do they adjust themselves to ups and downs of market values, and a rate of duty reasonable enough when enacted is often transformed by a fall of price into an onerous and prohibitory tax, restricting imports and diminishing revenue.—Hon. David A. Wells



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