

Sunday-School Lesson

Who Hath Woe?¹

By Lyman Abbott

"Mixed wine" is old wine that has become strong by being mingled with the lees. "Red wines" are said to be most esteemed in the East. "When it giveth its color" is, rather, when it sparkles or bubbles. The lesson is here, therefore, against convivial drinking, drinking not to quench thirst, not as a beverage, but as a social enjoyment.

Distilled liquors were unknown to the ancients; the art of distillation, though not absolutely unknown, was comparatively little used until a much later period; and much of the evil of modern drunkenness has come from the free use of the product of the still. But this passage affords quite conclusive evidence that the use of wines is not a sovereign cure for drunkenness; and also that the evil is not unknown in warm climates, though it may be greater in the colder regions.

There are three possible uses of alcoholic liquor:

1. It may be used as a medicine. I believe that there are certain abnormal conditions of the body in which no medicine is so effective. Speaking generally, alcoholic liquors are useful, if at all, to men past middle life; they are not only dangerous as a temptation, they are ordinarily injurious, even if used in moderation, in men under middle life and in full possession of their physical powers.

2. They may be used as a beverage. They may take the place of cold water. Probably it is true that there are localities where pure water cannot be readily secured, and where the common wine of the country is safer as a mere quencher of thirst. Yet this condition does not exist so often as men imagine. A friend of mine once asked a gentleman who had lived much in Paris, "What is the matter with the water there, that Americans cannot drink it?" "Nothing," he replied, "except that the wine is so good and so cheap." That was many years ago. It is not so good now. Substantially universal testimony agrees that the common wines of the Continent of Europe are far from good. Ordinarily, water quenches thirst better than wine or beer. And water can always be made safe by boiling it.

3. The most common use of alcoholic liquor is that indicated in this passage from the Proverbs. It is used, not truly as a beverage, but as a stimulant, and as an aid to social companionship. It is drunk, not to quench thirst, but to promote conviviality—for half-sensuous, half-aesthetic enjoyment. Substantially all saloon drinking is of this kind—that is, it is either for stimulation or for conviviality.

Whatever may be said for the other forms of drinking—whatever of the necessity of alcohol as a medicine, or even of its value as a beverage—for which latter use in my judgment the arguments are more specious than sound—no serious argument can be presented for its use as a social stimulant and a means of conviviality. Whether it is punch at a reception or champagne at a dinner-party, alcoholic liquors taken to loosen the tongue, promote the flow of conversation, create conviviality, are always and entirely bad. For their effect physiologically is, not to stimulate the higher nature, but to paralyze the powers of self-control. The man talks more freely, not because he has more to say, but because he has less control, less of that judgment which leads to reticence. And as he drinks more his conversation becomes more foolish, until it ends in absolute imbecility. It may be laid down as an axiom that alcohol does not stimulate either the intellect or the affections; it lessens control by the reason and the judgment.

It is against this convivial drinking that the writer of our paragraph directs his condemnation. Sooner or later it brings woe, sorrow, contentions, babbling, useless wounds, redness of eyes; sooner or later it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder.

Whatever you may think of the use of wine as a medicine, whatever you may think con-

cerning its harmlessness, or even its value as an accompaniment of your meals, beware of convivial drinking in all its forms. It is always dangerous, and never justified.

Correspondence

The Coal Strike—The Operators' Side

To the Editors of *The Outlook*:

You call attention to the article of Professor Edward W. Bemis in your issue of May 12, asking your readers to "read the article through," which I should have done in any case. For what Professor Bemis says about the violation of contracts, if it be true, and I do not doubt it, there is neither excuse, palliation, nor defense; but there is, nevertheless, something to be said on the other side.

In every question there are always two sides, and it seems to me that in this instance, as in many others, the side of the operators fails to get any hearing at all.

In the first place, the ability to pay any wages at all—except at a loss—must come from the operator's ability to get at least as much for his product as he pays for it. Now, I purpose to speak only of operations of which I have personal knowledge, viz., coal-mining in West Virginia and western Pennsylvania, and in those only of the shipments made by river. A short time before the strike the quality of Pittsburgh coal most largely shipped brought in the Cincinnati market \$1.12½ per ton in barges. Let us take the lowest scale of wages proposed by the miners as the basis of the cost of this coal—that is, 60 cents per ton. I cannot say with certainty what the cost of loading this coal into barges in the Pittsburgh district is. On the Kanawha River in West Virginia it amounts at some mines, where hauling outside is necessary, to as much as the mining; but as very little of this is done at Pittsburgh, the cost will be considerably less. Let us put it at one-half, or 30 cents per ton; cost of towing (500 miles), 25 cents per ton; royalty, 12½ cents per ton; total, \$1.27½. Now I am satisfied that in the actual working these figures would be more rather than less; besides, I have added nothing for the cost of selling, nor for wear and tear, which in the coal business is very great.

The figures given above are for what is known as lump coal—that passing over a one and a half inch screen. There are two grades made, known as nut and slack, for which neither the miner nor the landlord gets anything.

These, and the profits from the somewhat maligned stores, are what the operator will have to recoup himself with for the loss on lump; and, without going into details, I will simply say that they will not do it.

A word about the mining stores so much talked about. It is difficult to rightly characterize them. There are stores and stores, as is the case about many other things in this world. The writer once heard a man boast that he had made fifty per cent. profit out of his store, and at once expressed his opinion of the matter in as fitting language as he could command. It depends largely upon the kind of man an operator is; if he is greedy and rapacious, the men suffer; if decent, I do not think they do. Most mines are so located that the men would not have access—I speak now of West Virginia—where there is much, if any, competition, and it is not yet proved that the average merchant is less rapacious—given the chance—than the average coal operator. In order to get at the real truth of the matter each case would have to be tried on its merits, and I am inclined to think that, on the whole, the showing would not be a very good one for the stores.

But we come now to what is the most important part of this controversy. It is asserted in many quarters, and believed in, I have no doubt, by the miners, that if a uniform scale of wages could be agreed upon, and the agreement carried out, this would determine the price of coal and so obviate the whole difficulty. To my thinking, no greater fallacy exists. It has no standing whatever, unless there is coupled with it the absolute power to restrict the output of coal. If more coal goes to market than there is demand for, the price falls as inevitably as water runs down hill, and it is this matter of supply and demand that determines the price of coal, and not the price paid for mining it. The sooner this is recognized, the better for all parties concerned. To restrict the output in the soft-coal business, scattered as it is over a large extent of country, with a large number of operators, and as many more at liberty to become such, would simply be an impossibility.

But suppose it could be done, you would simply be establishing a monopoly, or, if you please, a trust, and would make laborers in other occupations, who are in as great stress as the miners, pay more for their coal than they otherwise would.

JUSTICE.



Another Kind of "Humor"

To the Editors of *The Outlook*:

While I was reading the readable paper of Mr. Adams on American humor, I was expectantly waiting to see if he would also mention the uproar of laughter which an oath causes, from feminine or masculine lips, on the stage of a first-class or second-class theater in any of our large cities. Is not this on a par with the grinning caused in back-country districts by an individual putting out a leg over which the unheeding may stumble and fall, or wearing a horse-collar for fun, and the like barbarities? If an actor or actress will only say "damn" occasionally through a play, the dullest and stupidest melodrama or farce is seemingly saved from failure.

What is it that makes an oath in the theater so deliciously irresistible to the very best classes of American audiences? In England, France, and Germany before the best audiences a "cuss-word" must have point or special appositeness, or be ripped out by provocation, to be regarded by itself as something gleefully to roar over in laughter. Not so in New York theaters, even before the selectest gatherings. If a young and pretty actress will only swear occasionally, the deacons, wardens, and church trustees in the house are ready, you would think, to take out the horses and themselves draw her home in giddy triumph. The more serious part of the audience is always the more bewitched by this "humor." F. D.

The Poor and Doctors' Bills

To the Editors of *The Outlook*:

The question is, Is it true? Some people state facts, and some state their own impressions. Whether a fact or a fancy sketch, a man tells a story, and it is about a poor man at the Park—a poor man, but he can afford his cheap tobacco, a rank poison, if a slow one, and which it is said but two animals in the world will touch. That's instinct. The man is reflecting. That is well; some people do not reflect. Perhaps about a sick child—"one of the blessings of the poor being that, in case of sickness in the family, the doctor's bill must be thought of first of all."

This man must have lived in an exceptional world! Another of the blessings of the poor is that they are hardly ever expected to pay their bills.

"Pay a doctor!" said one of them. "I never expect to pay a doctor. Why, you can get doctors enough any day without paying them."

Evidently this man of the dreamer's fancy was exceptional.

There are no men who give more of their time and strength freely than our doctors—in the hospitals, in the dispensaries, in the clinics, days and weeks and months of work, and often unacknowledged; while, in the Reports, the men who give money appear in full force.

We used to write in our "copy-books," "Time is money." That's what they have to give, and that is given freely.

A woman will dress herself poorly, leave her carriage

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¹ International Sunday-School Lesson for June 17, 1894.—Prov. xxiii., 29-35.

in the next street, and walk to the dispensary and get advice gratis, while a poor and feeble woman with her child must wait her turn.

A man will dispute a bill and cut it down. He was not at home to see daily or twice a day the doctor's visits to the sick and feeble child or mother. He has investments; the doctor has his time and brains.

Now and then men, especially in the country, will tell their stories. Here is one:

Just as I came home [relates my voracious friend] for a rest and a comfortable supper, came an urgent message: a child was dying, and it was miles away, a dark and stormy night. I set out, and there was one man always on the alert. He had never had energy to nail down the flooring of his stoop or piazza, so I heard him rattling over the boards.

"Doctor, who's sick now?" "I'll tell you when I come back," and I rushed on. It was growing late. I finally came to the house and all was dark; the gate was closed; I had to tie my horse and go up to the house. I rapped and pounded and whistled. No sound. Finally an upper window was raised.

"What's the matter? Who's there?" "It is I, the doctor. You sent for me in a great hurry—the baby sick." "Oh, Doctor, 'tain't no matter; I only give him a little too much *paregoricky*. He's all right." I was not all right, and it seemed to me one of Sydney Smith's cases for "a form of sound words that a good man could use when excited."

I turned away, and then came the climax: "I say, Doctor, you won't charge nothin' for this visit, will you?"

On the weary way home I could not forget my promise to the inquisitive neighbor, so I stopped my poor horse and went to the "stoop." I rattled and pounded, and a head came out at the upper window.

"What's the matter?" "Oh, I promised to stop and tell you about Ginx's baby down at the pond." "Oh, 'tain't no matter, Doctor; some other time will do." "Tain't no matter." But I had promised, and the man came down, rather lightly clad. He stood in the crack of the door, and I made the most of the details.

"Oh, come in, come in!" "No, I can't leave my horse, and I promised to let you know."

Having given details enough to satisfy his curiosity and my innocent malice, I made my way home, a sadder and a wiser man, but with a tinge of satisfaction withal.

This was one touch of experience, as told by a man who made the best of things. And, we repeat, if this man of bad tobacco reflected upon his sick child and the inevitable "doctor's bill," he was an exceptional man. There be such, no doubt, but there are very few in this vale of tears.

Look over the hospital reports. This and that man or woman gave money; it is well. And some gave largely, which was well. The Lord had given to them freely, and they were wise. Those who ministered to the sick, the maimed, the halt, and the blind, gave themselves. D. M. D.

A Convert to Bimetallism

To the Editors of *The Outlook*:

In common with most people in this neighborhood (Boston), I have been a rigid monometallist, and it has surprised me to see *The Outlook* taking the bimetallic course it has adopted; but I grow inclined to think that there is more in the silver question than we somewhat narrow Easterners are aware.

I should not be surprised to see the Tory party in England and the Republican party here make bimetalism a leading issue in the next election. The landed gentry there and the farmers here are in the same boat. They both suffer from the steady fall in prices which has been going on so long, and which is apparently best explained by the appreciation of gold. Twenty-five years ago wheat was about \$1.25 a bushel; now it is fifty-three cents. If I were a farmer, and had borrowed \$1,000 on mortgage when wheat was \$1 a bushel—in other words, when I could have paid the debt with a thousand bushels of wheat—I should be "mad clear through" to discover that now I should have to raise two thousand bushels to pay the debt. My land, too, has lost in productive power—I suppose I am out on the prairies—in that time. I should feel as if I had made a bargain with a Shylock, and that he had beaten me badly. If a man calling himself a Populist or any other "ist" came along and told me that he saw the situation from my point of view, and that he would do his best to improve my side of the bargain if I sent him to Congress, I should vote for him as early and often as possible.

It seems to me that something like this feeling—when the problem is reduced to its lowest terms—lies at the base of this Populist movement, and, instead of jeering at it, we should try to understand it, and, if possible, remove the causes which gave it birth.

I am told that the world's money consists of three thousand millions of gold and four thousand millions of silver. Silver grows continually cheaper, or gold continually dearer. Is it surprising that the people who hold gold—e. g., England—should not object? Is it surprising that the people who hold silver—e. g., India—should protest? If I were an English officer stationed in India, and I found that every year I had less money to send home to pay for my children's education at Eton or Oxford, should I not feel vexed? My pay would be the same, and yet I would have less money. Should I not suspect that Lombard Street was somehow cheating me?

The fall in the price of silver carries with it the fall of all prices. Where is this fall to stop? Fifty-cent wheat seemed incredible ten years ago. May we not have forty-cent wheat in a year or two, or ten-cent wheat eventually? and that means the making of a peasant out of the American farmer. What does "lack of confidence" mean but "I won't buy now, because things will be cheaper by and by?"

The measure of the commerce of the world is the gold and silver coin. The wealth is, of course, far greater, but the portion of the wealth that is exchanged—e. g., the commerce—is measured by the coin

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in circulation. Now, the commerce increases with great strides, but the coinage only slowly. The cessation of silver coinage—the demonetization of silver in the various countries—naturally diminishes the supply of coin. Consequently, that which is left must measure more commerce, or, in other words, appreciate in value; hence a fall in prices and "hard times."

The remedy seems to be expansion, and, as gold is not abundant, the next best thing must be used. All the nations ought to begin to mint silver. A demand for silver would be created, and the price would rise, and with that price would go wheat and everything else, except sermons and parish calls. **

"Forging a Chain"

To the Editors of *The Outlook*:

What a chain the younger men of the majority of the Presbyterian General Assembly have helped to forge for themselves! The old men who are theologically ossified may be excused. But the younger men, many of them, cannot retain their present views another fifteen years. And think of the position such men will occupy when obliged to dissent, in preaching, from the "natural and intended sense" of any statement of Scripture! When will these men realize that the twisting and torturing of Scripture is intellectually and morally dishonest? Take the first chapter of Genesis. *Six eons* means six long or short periods of time, but *six evenings* and *six mornings* ("There was evening and there was morning, a first day," etc.) means six, or possibly three, days of the week. By no possible honest construction can it be made to mean otherwise. Either the writer erred, or modern science is false. Doubtless some take the latter alternative, for men who are capable of saying the stupid and silly things that were said in the last two Assemblies must be capable of believing even now that the universe was made in a week, if not that the sun moves around the earth. But some of the Commissioners hold more modern views. If they only knew what a large and noble liberty they would find in the path of simple honesty!

"Oh, what a tangled web we weave,

When first we practice to deceive!"

The tremendous spiritual force of the Bible is wasted by the mad endeavor to maintain inerrancy. It was Paul who said, "For the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." W. P. W.

"Errancy" and the Prayer-Book

To the Editors of *The Outlook*:

Might there not be some words on the "inerrancy" of the Book of Common Prayer? We never hear the Burial Service without a silent protest. Surely the men who arranged our "scarcely uninspired" Liturgy needed a little more inspiration and a little less

literalism. The passage in Job is familiar (see Revised Version, xix., 25)—"But I know that my redeemer [or vindicator] liveth, and that he shall stand up at the last upon the earth: and after my skin shall have been thus destroyed, yet from my flesh shall I see God." (From the old version an old man said, in his literalness, "Oh, I've seen those *skin worms*, many a time!") Later, chapter xl., the Lord answered Job and met his complaint; and Job then says, in xlii., 5, "I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee." Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

Surely it is "wresting Scripture" to draw from these declarations, this history, proof-texts for the resurrection of the body, the flesh and blood and bones.

There are other things—declarations of our Lord—which are taken too literally; as, for instance, in Matt. xxv. We should remember—"All these things spake Jesus unto them in parables, and without a parable spake he not unto them."

TRUTH.

Magazines, and What to Do with Them

To the Editors of *The Outlook*:

This is an age of papers and magazines, and a time of great wastefulness. You have read them and done with them. What next? Perhaps you lend them, with the Scripture rule "hoping for nothing again" of them, or send them to some hospital or society. So far, well, but even that involves some trouble and care. Some of us who have time and patience get the names of those who are reading—hungry and mail our waste reading to them every week or month. It is a good thing, but calls for the grace of continuance. Also at times there is one article which is to you of special value, and you proceed to lay aside and keep that special number, and it gets dog-eared and dusty, and you forget; and when, some time, you chance to want that special article for some specific purpose, perhaps you find it, perhaps not. Even if you have made a memorandum in your book of reference you are not sure of the title.

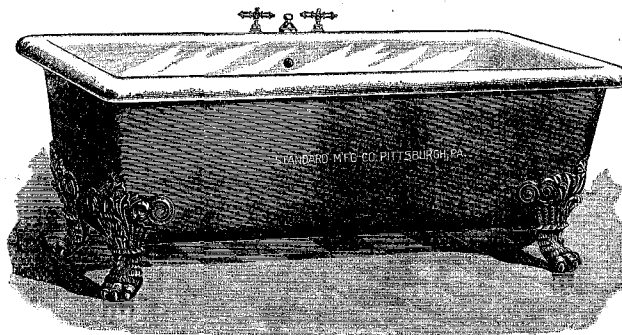
Now we have a remedy. We take out the specific articles, and, when there is a sufficient number, have them bound in a volume of miscellany. If needful, we make an index on a blank leaf—and then you have it. We find a number of such volumes invaluable, and, being very exclusive in the choice, they do not multiply too fast.

There has just come an instance where the writer needed certain facts, and the memory went so far that, the volumes being classified with a manuscript index, it was not needful to go far to find the very facts needed.

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