

***Temperance Sermons.* By Various Authors. 12mo, pp. 281. New York and Cincinnati: The Methodist Book Concern. Price, cloth, \$1.00 net.**

HERE is ammunition for the culminating fight against Everybody's Enemy. Fifteen sermons loaded with solid stuff by men of marked ability and acknowledged eminence. We wish we had room for them all on our pages. Here are one of the prize-winning sermons by Dr. Grant Perkins of Michigan; one of Dr. David Keppel of Central New York, on "Drinking According to Law"; one by Dr. Charles E. Locke of California; and one as solid as granite by Dr. W. W. W. Wilson of Brooklyn. All these strong preachers are known to our readers by their articles in the **METHODIST REVIEW**. We are sure that they will approve our presenting one more sample of the rich and moving eloquence of that gifted and glowing genius, Robert McIntyre. So here is his sermon on "Snakes in the Stump," given without quotation marks:

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The cabin in the clearing, in the middle of the West fifty years ago, was a familiar and cheering sight to the summer traveler along the highways of the timber lands. Smoke curling from the chimney, the cow tethered in the grass, the sheep grazing on the hill, the horse looking from the stable, the chickens feeding in the yard, pigeons wheeling overhead, the Cherokee roses around the window, the hollyhocks along the fence, the lilacs beside the well, where the tall sweep brought up the brimming bucket, and the open door through which the open dressers preached all the hospitable code of the friendly ethics common on the old country road, made a picture on the retina to be hung on memory's wall as a joy forever. In such a home lived a young farmer and his wife with their two boys of four and six years of age. In the garden stood a big stump of a sycamore tree, which had in its top a depression partly filled with leaves. While playing, the younger lad climbed on it and stepped into the hollow place. Instantly he screamed in terror trying to get out, calling for help, stretching his hands pitifully. The other one ran to his aid and scrambled in to lift him out, but, alas! he was caught also in the terrible trap, for that remnant of the tree round which the wild morning glories climbed and on which the robin sang at dawn was a nest of rattlesnakes. When the father ran from the meadow and drew them out, the curly-haired darlings were moaning with agony and writhing with convulsions; and soon, while both parents bent above them on the porch weeping and praying, they closed their eyes in death and their sweet spirits left the swollen, distorted bodies to enter another world. Next day two little graves were dug under the elm tree, and the sad-hearted couple burned that stump down to its roots and covered the ashes with earth to hide it forever. Herein is a homely parable. That stump sets before me vividly the liquor traffic and its inmost diabolism. Around this gigantic wickedness poets like Anacreon and Omar have wreathed the flowers of fancy and twined the tendrils of imagery till its hideousness is hidden in sensuous strophes of licentious desire. Singers like Burns and Villon have fluted their mellifluous notes in praise of this destroyer of man until millions have been brought low by the serpents coiled within. One of them is "Degeneracy." In the Popular Science Monthly for January, 1911, Dr. Davenport, an authority on eugenics, says, "Our only hope for humanity is in better matings." This is the gospel, shouted through the megaphone of modern science. All our prisons, almshouses, insane asylums, quarantines, and lazarettos attest it. All institutes for the feeble-minded, all reform schools, orphanages, infirmaries assert it likewise. One must ask here, How can we have better heredity when alcohol is permitted to pollute men and women, to dilute the blood, to shrivel the nerves, and engorge the delicate tissues of the brain? The increased host of delinquents, defectives, demented, subnormals, and incompetents coming into existence and threatening to shake down the social order, show that some enemy of the race is poisoning the stream of Life at its source. O the pathos of the children flung crippled into existence, facing the stern realities, maimed, diseased, halt, fearful, unfit. Their cradle is the infested stump. They are bitten at birth. Their pinched faces make mute protest against us; their pale

lips say, "I never had half a chance," their wan hands beckon us to judgment. How shall we step over their little graves to face the ire of Him who loves "the least of these"? How, I say? The second snake is Crime. When anarchy lifts its red front and hisses its lawless threatnings through the shuddering city, its nest is surely found over or under or in or nigh the saloon. When the mob howls in frenzy and the town is blanched with fear, loud ascends the cry, "Close the barrooms, keep the liquor locked up, shut every groggery at once." When misrule of any type, open or secret, is set up, or iniquity of any degree is planned or executed, this breeder of violence and disturber of peace stalks abroad. Then the stiletto flashes, and the victim sinks on the sanded floor of the village shebeen. Then the pistol cracks, and the officer of the law reels. Then the bludgeon descends, and the helpless wife staggers and falls. Then the door opens, and the family flee shivering into the night. Then the hiccoughing colonel in the saddle blunders and orders brave soldiers to hapless destruction. Then the boozy captain on the slippery deck runs his ship on the rocks and cuts her throat on the cruel reef, and the drowned sailors are thrown on the sand. In almost every calamity this hag of hell has her full share, dancing her ghastly delirium in red-stained robes and shaking pestilence from her leprous hands, and for what? Why are millions mired in shame, bogged in poverty? Why do criminals, immured from the sun, play with insects in their cells to keep from madness? Why do transgressors, weakkneed and repentant, whisper "Good-by" through the black cap upon the scaffold stairs? Why do heart-broken wives hide and mothers moan and little kiddies cry when they learn that father will come home no more? O, well! reason enough. That the lords of the still may feed fat and sleep soft and roll in wealth and their jeweled dames seek the Riviera in swift yachts to watch the blue ocean flash and flow; that our masters of the mash tub may dwell in stately mansions on the select boulevards and have winter houses amid the flex and orange trees, when their victims face the sleet in cooped and windowed raggedness. O, well, what more would you have? Hush! The third snake is Misery. There is a slack-twisted sophistry spun down the line of years which runs, "Let rum alone and it will let you alone." Will it? There never was a baser, sadder lie than this. My ears ring now across forty years with the "keening." Did you ever hear it? O the wordless, piteous, long-drawn agony of it, of a fine girl from Erin's Isle who found her brother dead in the woods beside a doggerly in the village of my youth, and all night, above the chirring of the crickets, the call of the katydids, the plaint of the whippoorwill, rose that unearthly soul-chilling wail. She let it alone, but it branded her for life! I can see the well-to-do farmer sitting before me in church as I told the old, old story. As twilight fell I dismissed the people, and he arose, went to his wagon, rode home, entered the door—to be shot dead by a drunken hireling. He touched no glass, drank no drop. He let it alone, but the fuddled fool who slew him, hauled his corpse to a stream, and flung it in. He was hanged for it, and, weeping in his prison, told me drink had been his downfall. The dear old German father who took me one night to help get his son

out of a dive, said, "When he was a baby he had the fever and the doctor said he would die before morning. He was the only child I had, and I couldn't let him go. I prayed the Lord to spare him, but I have wished a thousand times he had died in his innocent childhood. He is a drunkard now, he has crushed his mother and brought my gray hairs down in grief." That sire let it alone. He is in heaven to-day, but O, if I could say he has his boy! It lets no one alone. I have seen a bonnie wee girl under a surgeon's knife because of her father's cravings. I have seen a chum hang his head as a debauched parent tottered by. I have seen a whole family wiped out by it. I have seen honor smirched, man degraded, woman dethroned, soldiers disgraced, bodies rotted, minds clouded, souls lost. Our whole nation is impoverished, peeled, made sorrowful by the trouble it makes. This was well put by a woman who was humbled by her husband's weakness. At a total abstinence meeting she heard a well-dressed wife of a tavern keeper say, "What will we do for a living if his place is closed?" The answer was: "I will give you my job scrubbing the floors and stairs of the schoolhouse, for I will have money enough if my man goes no more to your bar." Do you hear the children sobbing in the night, my friend? Do you hear the poor women praying? Hark, they are saying, "Lord, is there none to help?" Give me your hand. Let us stand up together and make a vow, "While we have a vote or a voice we are *against this thing any time or anywhere.*" In the back of my head lies an ancient story of Sam Johnson, the bluff, bearish, brainy scholar of Britain. In the height of his fame he was found standing in a down-pour of rain on the open road of an English village. When asked his reason for this queer procedure the dripping Ursa replied, "I was making atonement on the spot where I disobeyed my father forty years ago." I recently returned to my boyhood neighborhood. Full of gratitude I rolled four decades from my shoulders and stood up therein to praise the memory of a good man whose advice I accepted and whose dictum I obeyed with undeniable advantage to myself and others. In the pulpit of the church to which he belonged I stood and called his name, remembered by few—for he died years ago and all his kin are scattered. I told the folk that he was my boss during the Civil War in a factory where I toiled as a boy. How he showed interest in his underlings and stirred them to join a society, now forgotten, called "The Cadets of Temperance," an offspring of "The Sons of Temperance." I recited the dim scene, where, in the lodge room, I took the vow of total abstinence with uplifted hand in solemn mood, how I signed the roster, drank the pledge of fealty in cold water, sang the ode, received the password, and went out girded for the fray against King Alcohol. As I walked home alone that summer night across the fields, with frogs calling "knee-deep," and fireflies weaving their mystic dance around me, I paused at a stile to repeat my obligation and renew my youthful resolve to abstain from all intoxicants. Half a lifetime after, in a State asylum for feeble-minded children, when I heard the matron say that three fourths of the imbecile inmates were the progeny of drunken parents, I dug up my oath against rum and deep in my soul registered once more my undying hatred of this fell destroyer.

A short time after my adolescent initiation I was sternly tested on this matter. I was apprenticed to the bricklayer's trade. My employer knew his business well, was a skillful craftsman, but much given to drink, as were all his employees. At noon of my first day he bade me pour the water from the pail, go to a nearby tavern, and get it filled with ale for the dinner. I brought it as ordered, took my place at the end of the line, seated like the rest in the shadow of the wall, and saw the bucket with a tin cup therein coming slowly toward me. I trembled inwardly as I saw that every bricklayer, every hod carrier, every mortar mixer, every apprentice drank the beer. From my master down each took a share, and I realized that I, a poor weak lad, on my first day in a new crew, must offend the whole gang, censure their customs, stand their sneers, endure their scoffs, or surrender my principles. When the booze reached me I whispered a refusal to the one who passed it, but the "gaffer," thinking I was merely timid in new company, cried out in hearty old country style, "Take it, Robert, don't be shy, I pay for it; you are one of us, have your sip of it." I said, with faltering voice, while all eyes turned on me, "Excuse me, Mr. George, I never drank liquor and cannot begin now." He laughed uproariously, as did the others, and shouted, "Ho, ho, lad, you'll never be a bricklayer till you learn to drink." I put the untouched meal in my basket, arose slowly, shaking like an aspen tree, and walking down the row of scornful workmen, I passed before the leader and said, "Mr. George, if that is true, I will go home and tell my father I am discharged; for drink liquor I will not, now or ever; I will not!" I think I had mysterious help that day, unseen of all. To my amazement, the boss leaped up, took my hand, and said, "God bless you, boy, stand fast and you will be a man some day." Then to the wage-earners he said, "If any man of you ever asks him to drink you will suffer for it." The first step is the hardest, and I had won the heaviest battle. I worked four years with him and saw the ruin drink made. One of my early friends became through it a murderer; another a madman; another an outcast; another a thief. I have seen wives crushed, homes destroyed, children disgraced, babes diseased, families divided, mothers bereft, brothers estranged, firms bankrupted, lawyers degraded, doctors degenerated, and ministers debauched. And all who are in prisons, insane asylums, or incurable hospitals, who rot in lazarettos, or sleep in potter's fields through this treacherous foe of God and man began as moderate drinkers. My words will not reach or shake the inhuman parasites who are fattened by the gains of this awful traffic, but to the boys I cry, "Swear eternal enmity to rum, and enlist for this holy war till America is free from it forever."