

**THE WORLD'S GREAT
SERMONS. IN TEN
VOLUMES, VOL. VIII.
TALMAGE TO KNOX LITTLE**

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The World's Great Sermons. In Ten Volumes, Vol. VIII. Talmage to Knox Little by Grenville Kleiser

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GRENVILLE KLEISER

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

THOMAS DE WITT TALMAGE was born at Bound Brook, N. J., in 1832. For many years he preached to large and enthusiastic congregations at the Brooklyn Tabernacle. At one time six hundred newspapers regularly printed his sermons. He was a man of great vitality, optimistic by nature, and particularly popular with young people. His voice was rather high and unmusical, but his distinct enunciation and earnestness of manner gave a peculiar attraction to his pulpit oratory. His rhetoric has been criticized for floridness and sensationalism, but his word pictures held multitudes of people spellbound as in the presence of a master. He died in 1901.

TALMAGE

1832—1901

A BLOODY MONSTER¹

It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him.—Gen. xxxvii., 33.

JOSEPH'S brethren dipt their brother's coat in goat's blood, and then brought the dabbled garment to their father, cheating him with the idea that a ferocious animal had slain him, and thus hiding their infamous behavior. But there is no deception about that which we hold up to your observation to-day. A monster such as never ranged African thicket or Hindustan jungle hath tracked this land, and with bloody maw hath strewn the continent with the mangled carcasses of whole generations; and there are tens of thousands of fathers and mothers who could hold up the garment of their slain boy, truthfully exclaiming, "It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him." There has, in all ages and climes, been a tendency to the improper use of stimulants. Noah took to strong drink. By this vice, Alexander the Conqueror was conquered. The Romans at their feasts

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fell off their seats with intoxication. Four hundred millions of our race are opium-eaters. India, Turkey, and China have groaned with the desolation; and by it have been quenched such lights as Halley and De Quincey. One hundred millions are the victims of the betel-nut, which has specially blasted the East Indies. Three hundred millions chew hashish, and Persia, Brazil, and Africa suffer the delirium. The Tartars employ murowa; the Mexicans, the agave; the people at Guarapo, an intoxicating product taken from sugarcane; while a great multitude, that no man can number, are the votaries of alcohol. To it they bow. Under it they are trampled. In its trenches they fall. On its ghastly holocaust they burn. Could the muster-roll of this great army be called, and could they come up from the dead, what eye could endure the reeking, festering putrefaction? What heart could endure the groan of agony? Drunkenness! Does it not jingle the burglar's key? Does it not whet the assassin's knife? Does it not cock the highwayman's pistol? Does it not wave the incendiary's torch? Has it not sent the physician reeling into the sick-room; and the minister with his tongue thick into the pulpit? Did not an exquisite poet, from the very top of his fame, fall a gibbering sot, into the gutter, on his way to be married to one of the fairest daughters of New England, and at the very hour the bride was decking herself

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for the altar; and did he not die of delirium tremens, almost unattended, in a hospital? Tamerlane asked for one hundred and sixty thousand skulls with which to build a pyramid to his own honor. He got the skulls, and built the pyramid. But if the bones of all those who have fallen as a prey to dissipation could be piled up, it would make a vaster pyramid. Who will gird himself for the journey and try with me to scale this mountain of the dead—going up miles high on human carcasses to find still other peaks far above, mountain above mountain white with the bleached bones of drunkards?

The Sabbath has been sacrificed to the rum traffic. To many of our people, the best day of the week is the worst. Bakers must keep their shops closed on the Sabbath. It is dangerous to have loaves of bread going out on Sunday. The shoe store is closed: severe penalty will attack the man who sells boots on the Sabbath. But down with the window-shutters of the grog-shops. Our laws shall confer particular honor upon the rum-traffickers. All other trades must stand aside for these. Let our citizens who have disgraced themselves by trading in clothing and hosiery and hardware and lumber and coal take off their hats to the rum-seller, elected to particular honor. It is unsafe for any other class of men to be allowed license for Sunday work. But swing out your signs, and open your doors, O ye

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traffickers in the peace of families and in the souls of immortal men. Let the corks fly and the beer foam and the rum go tearing down the half-consumed throat of the inebriate. God does not see! Does He? Judgment will never come! Will it?

It may be that God is determined to let drunkenness triumph, and the husbands and sons of thousands of our best families be destroyed by this vice, in order that our people, amazed and indignant, may rise up and demand the extermination of this municipal crime. There is a way of driving down the hoops of a barrel so tight that they break. We have, in this country, at various times, tried to regulate this evil by a tax on whisky. You might as well try to regulate the Asiatic cholera or the smallpox by taxation. The men who distil liquors are, for the most part, unscrupulous; and the higher the tax, the more inducement to illicit distillation. Oh! the folly of trying to restrain an evil by government tariff! If every gallon of whisky made—if every flask of wine produced, should be taxed a thousand dollars, it would not be enough to pay for the tears it has wrung from the eyes of widows and orphans, nor for the blood it has dashed on the Christian Church, nor for the catastrophe of the millions it has destroyed for ever.

I sketch two houses in one street. The first is bright as home can be. The father comes

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at nightfall, and the children run out to meet him. Bountiful evening meal! Gratulation and sympathy and laughter! Music in the parlor! Fine pictures on the wall! Costly books on the table! Well-clad household! Plenty of everything to make home happy!

House the second! Piano sold yesterday by the sheriff! Wife's furs at pawnbroker's shop! Clock gone! Daughter's jewelry sold to get flour! Carpets gone off the floor! Daughters in faded and patched dresses! Wife sewing for the stores! Little child with an ugly wound on her face, struck by an angry blow! Deep shadow of wretchedness falling in every room! Doorbell rings! Little children hide! Daughters turn pale! Wife holds her breath! Blundering step in the hall! Door opens! Fiend, brandishing his fist, cries, "Out! out! What are you doing here?" Did I call this house second? No; it is the same house. Rum transformed it. Rum embruted the man. Rum sold the shawl. Rum tore up the carpets. Rum shook his fist. Rum desolated the hearth. Rum changed that paradise into a hell.

I sketch two men that you know very well. The first graduated from one of our literary institutions. His father, mother, brothers and sisters were present to see him graduate. They heard the applauding thunders that greeted his speech. They saw the bouquets tossed to his feet. They saw the degree conferred and

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the diploma given. He never looked so well. Everybody said, "What a noble brow! What a fine eye! What graceful manners! What brilliant prospects!"

Man the second: Lies in the station-house. The doctor has just been sent for to bind up the gashes received in a fight. His hair is matted and makes him look like a wild beast. His lip is bloody and cut. Who is this battered and bruised wretch that was picked up by the police and carried in drunk and foul and bleeding? Did I call him man the second? He is man the first! Rum transformed him. Rum destroyed his prospects. Rum disappointed parental expectation. Rum withered those garlands of commencement day. Rum cut his lip. Rum dashed out his manhood. Rum, accurst rum!

This foul thing gives one swing to its scythe, and our best merchants fall; their stores are sold, and they sink into dishonored graves. Again it swings its scythe, and some of our physicians fall into suffering that their wisest prescriptions cannot cure. Again it swings its scythe, and ministers of the gospel fall from the heights of Zion, with long resounding crash of ruin and shame. Some of your own households have already been shaken. Perhaps you can hardly admit it; but where was your son last night? Where was he Friday night? Where was he Thursday night? Wednesday night? Tuesday night? Monday