THE EVENING NEWS.

Monday, - - December 11, 1871.

THAT EVIL.

Remarks of Mr. Riddle, to the Evil Mass Meeting of the Woman's Club, at Lincoln Hall, Washington, D. C. Sep. 22, 1871.

Ladies and Gentlemen: I am here because I was asked to be, and for the same reason I arise to address you. No reluctance from indifference to this subject controls me; but in the presence of this momentous question, I frankly say I don't know what to do. When asked to speak of it, I don't know what to say. The fact that I am permitted to discuss it at all to such a numerous and variously constituted assemblage as this, marks a most important change in the public temper in reference to it. Six weeks ago he would have been a bold man who should dare to appear before a mixed or unmixed crowd and venture upon its discussion; and the woman who has brought this thing to this issue is something more than a heroine. Knowing this thing, so daintily called "the social evil," as greater than the sum of all other human evils, as reaching further and striking deeper, we must appear as not knowing it. A nod of the head, a distant wave of the hand, is all the allusion that has been permitted to it. And now we are brought to face it, to struggle with it, directly and seriously, as best we can.

This is no new thing; if it was we might deal with it. It is as ancient as antiquity. It commenced with the first outbreak of man's passion and woman's folly; and is incident to every phase of human society, whether barbarous or semi-civilized. It stained man's savage life, and curses his highest civilization. Old philosophy knew no remedy for it, and the principles of Christianity, as we practice and apply them, have not eradicated it. What can be done with it? What shall be said of it?

It is too wide and too deep, and can be barely the subject of legislation. It springs in sources and runs in channels not within the reach and sweep of our law. Burn the whole surface of society with caustic statutes, and it will flow and sweep on below, unchecked and untouched by all that lawmakers and courts can do; and fortunate is it if legislators, bench and bar are not swept away by it.

Enact the ten commandments and your courts cannot enforce them; attach penalties to the mandates of the later Scriptures, and give your police courts jurisdiction over them, and they remain as now unheeded.

There are things that cannot be dealt with by law, and he is wise who will not attempt it rashly.

I have no names and no denunciations for the more guilty of either sex involved in this sin. I am willing to think that both are often the victims of unhealthy conditions of society, inherited weakness and passion, and of temptations strong as necessity. None can measure for none can know the degree of crime that attended the first fall. We only know that society has awarded unequal punishment to offenders as most of equal guilt. In the nature of things, we know that woman cannot be the chief criminal; and yet whatever may be the punishment adjudged her by our common judge, society supplements it with a final irrevocable doom, that all men and all women conspire to execute.

A daughter goes down, and forever, in the whelming flood, to be no more named; a son, reeking and dripping, comes up out of it, to be received and welcomed. We wonder why this should be. The solution is easy. Woman, left to the impulses of her nature, in her horror of such impurity, would banish both, guilty men as guilty women; men more largely involved, make common cause—they shield and shelter each other, and decree that woman shall receive all men alike, with little reference to morality. And as they make, they enforce the law, and woman submits. Men have not the hardihood to ask her to receive their less guilty paramours, and she does not.

Think, then, of this loss of woman. Men perian by accident, by the hand of murder, in deserts, go down in the liquid whirl of stormy seas; but their memory lives and is cherished. Even the sea shall give up its dead. But she who is lost in a great town, who perishes amidst the hands and helps and in the broad glare of Christian day, and Christian churches, is left to sink and rot in the stews and slums of infamy—places that men declare are necessary, and treat with ribaldry whoever dares reach a hand to pluck the fallen back—

"Pluck up drowned honor by the hair."

The woman is fallen—the man escapes, sore, leprous and diseased, to poison and blast the present and future generations.

Of all the courses of voice, none visits upon its votary such awful consequences as the race of sensual license. When once a man falls under the sway of this passion it subordinates all the elements of his nature to its purpose. Intellect, instinct, ambition, aspiration, physical energy and vitality are all corrupted and made its pimps and ministers. He lives but for one purpose; restraint, morality and religion are less than names. God vanishes from the heavens and his soul perishes within him. For him woman performs but one office. His brain is rotten, his imagination intempered, his heart dead, and he is but a breathing, diseased, physical mass, filled with the larvæ of every foul passion and appetite, from which swarm an obscene brood of vices and crimes.

Don't say to me that woman, through any sin, can fall below man; and if there can remain in him elements that claim sympathy and toleration, how much more should we hopefully seek for them in the persons of his victims.

I don't care to dwell upon the causes of this evil; all that ever existed are now in full force, strong and vigorous in our stimulating modes of life.

This world of ours is a queer thing, and when it goes wrong it visits it sins on the most helpless, and often the least offending of its children; and never dreams of mending its own ways; declares that it can't in the very nature of things.

Men are born into it, to find all the homes and food and warm clothes already appropriated, nothing left for them; and when they hunger for education and food and clothes, the world tells him to work; and when he holds up ready hands, that is refused him; and when in starvation he steals to live, this world sends him to the penitentiary as logically as can be.

To be continued.

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The Singer	127,833	Florence	17,660
Wheeler & Wilson	83,228	Gold Medal	8,912
Howe	75,156	Ætna	5,806
Grover & Baker	57,402	Empire	3,500
Weed	35,032	Finkle & Lyon	2,420
Wilcox & Gibbs	28,869	Parham	1,760
American Buttonhole & Overseaming	14,573	Wilson	500

And several other companies who sold a few Machines.
It will be seen by this table that the popularity of the Singer Machine far exceeds that of all others, their sale being one-half greater than even that of the famous "Wheeler & Wilson" machine. This is owing to the fact that the Singer Company have lately commenced making, besides their old and well-established manufacturing machine, what is known as their "New Family Machine," which is selling at the rate of nine to one better than their old style." Their total sales for 1869 were 83,781 machines against the 127,833 of 1870, showing an increase of one-half in the latter year."—*New York Sun.*
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