

## THESIS.

Subject, Temperance in Our Public Schools.

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1.  
The right and duty of the State, to instruct the pupils of the public schools in the evils of Alcoholic beverages and other narcotics, is based upon the fact that the State has a right to preserve its own existence by destroying so far as it can whatever proves a menace to its life or to the clean and faithful administration of its laws.

A despotic government may be held intact for centuries by the sole means of arbitrary power, without regard to the intellectual and moral condition of its people; but a government like ours, which derives all its powers from the people, whose laws are the expressions of the public, whose clean, honest, and faithful administration depends upon the public conscience, cannot long survive, when the sources of all its powers—



the intelligence and virtue of its citizens have degenerated into ignorance<sup>nd</sup> vice. Under such conditions, we may, it is true, preserve the present form of government, but within the hollow shell of a republic, we would have a despotism as absolute as that of the Czar of Russia or as tyrannical as that — of that scourge of the race — the Sultan of Turkey.

Whether we can improve, extend, and perpetuate the present high civilization of the nineteenth century, depends upon the physical, mental, and moral character of the people as a whole. Therefore the question of how this kind of character can be assured, becomes one of profound importance. In looking for its answer we find it universally admitted as true that as a cause of



physical, mental, and moral degenera-  
tion, the use of alcoholic drinks, and  
other narcotics, outranks all other causes.  
That alcohol is incapable of imparting  
any good to the body is generally ad-  
mitted as a truth. Its elementary  
construction prevents the possibility of  
considering it as a substance of food  
which can build up or sustain any  
vital structure or organ, such as mus-  
cle or brain. In small quantities  
it quickens, in large quantities it  
deadens nervous action. The good  
is infinitesimal — the evil infinite.  
Wherever alcohol penetrates, there func-  
tional disturbances, followed by organ-  
ic degeneration will be set up.

It is difficult to ascertain the pre-  
cise mortality from intemperance, but  
if Mr. S. H. Richardson's estimate —



ten per cent of the entire mortality — be applicable to the United States, then more than one hundred thousand die yearly from this cause. It is also the most fruitful source of crime. Sir Mathew Hale — Chief Justice of England, said — "The places of judicature I have long held in this kingdom have given me an opportunity to observe the original cause of most of the enormities that have been committed for the space of nearly twenty years; and I have found that of the murders and manslaughters; the burglaries and robberies; the riots and tumults; and other outrages that have happened in that time were divided into five parts — four of them have been the products of excessive drink."

It is not only the greatest source of



crime, poverty and degradation, but the most dominant power at present in controlling political parties and their policies.

But how to free the individual, and the nation from the grip of this dangerous foe, is the problem which calls for the best efforts of every good citizen.

A clear view of what cannot be done, may help us to see what can. Restrictions of various degrees, — license, high and low, — government control, — have all been tried with but partial success.

In a government of majorities, like ours, we cannot prohibit what the majority wants; but we can command such universal education on the subject, through our system of public schools, as will prevent the formation of alcoholic and other narcotic habits.



This is what the State and national governments of the United States, are doing. All, or nearly all of the States have compulsory temperance education.

There are now more than sixteen millions of children of school age under temperance instruction laws.

It is the duty of every teacher and school director to see that this subject receives its full share of attention; and especially that the subject be thoroughly taught in the primary grades.

This is frequently neglected because it is thought a subject too difficult to place intelligently before young pupils. This is an entire mistake. There is no difficulty where simple textbooks without technical terms are used. The necessity for teaching the subject to primary grades is apparent when we remember



that—according to the New York Journal of Education—sixty per cent of all the pupils in public schools do not attend after leaving the primary grades. And if they have not received this instruction they go out into the world unwarned, unarmed, and exposed to the temptation to use intoxicants and other narcotics.

Besides, impressions made early on the child mind are the most enduring, and will be of most use even to pupils who continue their school course through higher grades.

And since we teach more effectively by example than by precept, no person should engage in the sacred calling of training the children of this country and shaping their destinies, who is addicted to the degrading habits of



using intoxicants as a beverage, or tobacco in any of its forms.

And are not the County Superintendents and other School officials, who invest such persons with authority to teach, — and the School Boards, who employ them, all responsible for the high trust reposed in them?

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