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THE RUM RAILROAD.

BY REV. E. F. REMINGTON.

THE Rum Railroad is continental. It extends, with its numerous branch roads, from the rivers to the ends of the earth. It has ten thousand thousand stations, but the trains all run to one terminus—the gate of hell. It is broad-gauge—not one rod is narrow-gauge—and it is a down grade all the way. The road-bed is laid in a concrete of blood and tears. Of the railroad king, who planned and built the road, we may say:

"His game is empires, his stakes are thrones, His table earth, his dice are human bones."
The cost of running the road yearly, in the United States, is six hundred millions of dollars; in Great Britain, seven hundred millions; and in the rest of the world five hundred millions. One billion eight hundred millions of dollars! Here is money enough to build a cottage for every poor family on the face of the earth, to feed all the hungry, clothe all the ragged, and educate all the ignorant; money enough to build a school-house on every river-bank and a college on every hill-top.

The five hundred millions of bushels of corn turned into liquid fire in this country every year would stall-feed ten millions of oxen, so that every toiler in the land could have on his table, every day, roast beef, with an abundant supply of the kindly fruits of the earth.

By an unchangeable law of this road, every man who travels on it becomes a stockholder, and is entitled to a portion of the dividends in the ratio of miles he travels. The dividends are rum-rheumatism, rum-dropsy, rum-palsy, and rum-consumption.
Throngs of the young and gay board the trains, with health and wealth and good hope of happy days; but soon they exchange gayety for sadness, purity of conscience for remorse, wealth for poverty, health for disease, and a brilliant wit for a beclouded understanding. Poets and orators, lords and dukes, kings and queens, have traveled on this road, until the light of reason has gone out, and despair has hovered over their dying pillow. Burns, Byron, and Sheridan live in the verse that immortally survives, but we should not forget that the young and aspiring are prone, in their admiration of men of genius, to imitate their vices. A palace-car would be dangerous, filled with great and mighty men, if it were infected with cholera or ship-fever.

This road, with its numerous branches, gives employment to tens of thousands of conductors, who are faithful in collecting the fare, and also in putting those off the trains who cannot pay their fare. More than one hundred thousand policemen find employment, day and night, looking after the wrecks along
THE RUM RAILROAD.

the road. Thousands are killed by collisions, and thousands are shot and stabbed on the trains. This gives employment to a great army of surgeons and physicians, of coffin-makers and grave-diggers.

A sign in red letters should be put up on every depot and station, with this inscription: "Trains leave here for the Poor-house, the Mad-house, the Jail, the Penitentiary, the Gallows, and for Hell!" Every Powder-house has, or should have, painted on it, "Keep Out." Every car on the Rum Railroad should have emblazoned on it, "Keep Out." There are myriads of paupers to-day who would not be in the poor-house if they had given good heed to the warning, "Keep Out." There are to-day myriads of criminals who would not be in a felon's cell if they had obeyed the mandate, "Keep Out;" and there are millions in hell who would not be with the damned if they had kept out of the shining cars of Rum, Gin, and Brandy.

Day and night millions, all over the world, are traveling on the Rum Railroad. They

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all begin on the accommodation train, but soon they take the lightning express that brings them to the terminus not far off. Myriads living along the line of this road steal, rob, and even murder, to get the money to pay their fare. They will leave father and mother, wife and children, to starve and freeze, that they may enjoy an excursion in the palace cars of this road, fitted up with Oriental splendor, and often with a band of music on board. No tears of distracted wife and starving children can melt their stony hearts. No tongue of eloquence can stop them on their way to death. In vain are they told of the time they are squandering, of the golden opportunities they are about to lose. In vain are they told of the lurid flames that will soon blaze over them, of the thunder-peals that will startle them, of the forked lightning that will make visible the blackness of darkness forever. They seem to invite to their bosom the worm that never dies, "imbibing immortality as it feeds upon the miseries of the damned." 

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The friends of the Rum Railroad tell us that excursions on the trains give health and pleasure; that they sharpen the wit and give eloquence to the tongue; and that the superiority of this age to past ages is owing to the stimulating forces introduced by this road. But we must not forget that the world had been charmed by Attic wit long before the first rail of this road had been laid. Long before it had been thought of, mankind had been held in thrall before the epic grandeur of Mæonides and the tragic power of Æschylus. The fires of genius had been kindled in the soul of Pindar long before they began to burn the bodies and souls of men in the fires of rum. Phidias unveiled his Jupiter Olympus to the wondering eyes of Greece long before the smoke of the distillery darkened the dome of heaven. The prince of orators stood on the Bema, flinging his thunder-bolts, long before huge armies began to stand before the ten thousand thousand bars in our land, getting themselves ready for a final plunge into the pit that is bottomless. The
grit and endurance displayed in the "Retreat of the Ten Thousand" finds no parallel in the gilded saloons of revelry and shame.

If Sir Isaac Newton was greater than Archimedes, greater than Euclid; if he stood head and shoulders above his brethren in the intellectual armies of the world, we must not forget that he never "took an enemy into his mouth to steal away his brains." We should also remember that Galileo was too much engaged watching the wondrous orbs blazing in the midnight sky to be caught by the glare of shining decanters. If men are seeking for pleasure, why not step into the astronomical chariot that lifted Kepler and Herschel above cloud-land to survey the archipelago of the universe, with its silver islands rounded and bounded by a sea of glory? In the far-gone ages men sought pleasure and excitement on the battle-field. The worshipers of Thor found pleasure in quaffing their wine from the skulls of their slaughtered enemies. The savage finds his greatest pleasure on the war-path and in the war-dance. Cannibals find
excitement in roasting and eating their prisoners of war. But all around us are myriads who look with dread upon the savage and cannibal, and yet are pouring down their throats liquid fire that is sure to burn to a crisp their lungs, kidneys, liver, and brain, so that, in the sight of God and angels, they are guilty of murder in the first degree.

All honest men cry out against railroad directors when they water their stock, but we shall smile approval when the directors of the Rum Railroad water their stock. The more water the better. Ninety-nine per cent. rain-water, and the race of stabbers and wife-whippers will come to an end, jails and prisons will be shut, and poor-houses will become the habitations of the owl and the bat. The more water the better, until the entire road is changed, even to its title and its terminus.

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