



Health Tract, No. 11.

MORAL AND SOCIAL  
EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL.

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**The Great Cause of Crime.**

It has been estimated by competent judges that intemperance is the cause of nine-tenths of all the crime among civilized nations. Alcohol benumbs the intellect, deadens conscience, and stifles reason. It leads its victim to theft to secure the means of indulgence, and steels the heart of the assassin for his bloody work.

To the crimes committed by the users of alcohol, themselves, should be added those committed by the wives and children of drunkards, who are driven to desperation and crime by the want and suffering occasioned by the cruel monster, drink.

The influence of liquor in increasing crime has often been well illustrated by the sad results which have invariably followed its first introduction into any community. Many newly settled districts have existed for several years with entire exemption from crime; no murders, no thefts, no public broils, no assaults upon persons or property, no act of violence of any kind, occurring to mar the peace and destroy the feeling of security of the community. At last a public house is opened in the midst of this prosperous and peaceful society, and a bar is erected, from which alcoholic liquors are dispensed. The evil consequences

are immediately apparent. Drinking engenders idleness. Idleness necessarily brings want, and want leads to theft; for a man who spends money for illegitimate purposes will not long continue particular to obtain his means from legitimate sources. Idleness and the conscience-searing, passion-stimulating influence of alcohol soon lead to acts of violence against persons and disregard of individual rights. Midnight carousals and drunken revels become frequent, out-breaking crimes are not uncommon, and the once peaceful community becomes a scene of constant disturbance and disquiet. The sheriff and constable, who previously found no occasion for the exercise of the functions of their offices, now find constant employment. A jail becomes a necessity, and is never without an occupant.

To say that alcohol is responsible for the revolution in the condition of such a community would be to state a fact too plain to be mistaken.

Another evidence of the influence of liquor-drinking upon crime is seen in the fact that crime increases and decreases in any particular locality almost in proportion to the increase and decrease of the use or sale of liquor.

During seven years, from 1812 to 1819, the annual consumption of liquor in England and Wales was 5,000,000 gallons; during the same period, 11,000 persons were annually arrested and committed for trial. During the seven years from 1826 to 1833, 9,000,000 gallons of liquor were annually consumed, and the annual number of arrests was 21,700. It will be observed that the amount of liquor sold during the last period was almost double that consumed during the first, and also that the number of arrests was nearly doubled during the last period. That this increase of crime was due to the influence of liquor and not to increase of population, is shown by the

fact that while crime had doubled, the population had increased but one-third.

Says Dr. Nott: "In Scotland, in 1823, the whole consumption of intoxicating liquors amounted to 2,300,000 gallons; in 1837, to 6,776,715 gallons. In the meantime, *crime increased 400 per cent.*, fever 1,600 per cent., death 300 per cent.; and the chances of human life diminished 44 per cent."

"In Ireland, when the distilleries were stopped in 1808, crime decreased amazingly. Again, when in 1810 they recommenced operations, the commitments increased nearly fourfold."—*Bacchus Dethroned*.

The increase of crime incident to the increased use of liquor is, of course, due to the influence of alcohol upon the moral nature of individuals. The direct effect of this poisonous drug seems to be to paralyze the will, to render the sensibilities obtuse, to deaden the conscience, to inflame the passions, to weaken the judgment, and to dethrone reason. Kleptomania (an uncontrollable disposition to steal) is one of the acknowledged effects of drink.

It is a well-established fact that the "social evil" is largely supported by the use of liquor. Brothels and public houses are frequently connected. Liquor and licentiousness go hand in hand.

### **Alcohol as a Cause of Disease.**

A very large proportion of the diseases to which man is subject are directly produced, or greatly aggravated, by the use of alcohol. The following is a partial list of those which have been directly traced to alcohol by Dr. Carpenter and other eminent medical men:—

*Gout, rheumatism, heart disease, dyspepsia, disease of kidneys, dropsy, obesity, disease of the liver, apoplexy, degeneration of the muscles, tremors, ulcers,*

*insanity, palsy, jaundice, epilepsy, consumption, melancholy, cancer, amaurosis, paralysis, hysterics, convulsions, gastritis, enteritis, ophthalmia, carbuncle, boils, fatal obstruction of lacteals, tabes, syncope, diabetes, lock-jaw, idiocy, impotency, mania, delirium tremens, Bright's disease, disease of the arteries, atrophy of the liver, congestion of the liver, and numerous other organic and functional derangements.*

We were informed by one of the visiting physicians of Bellevue Hospital, New York, that at least two-thirds of all the diseases treated there originated in drink.

### **Intemperance and Insanity.**

Intemperance, more than any other cause, fills our lunatic and idiot asylums. According to the statistics of insanity in France, thirty-four per cent. of the cases of lunacy among males were due to intemperance. One-half of the inmates of the Dublin insane asylum owe their disease to the use of liquor.

Lord Shaftesbury, chairman of the English Commission on Lunacy, in his report to parliament stated that six out of every ten lunatics in the asylums were made such by alcohol.

Dr. S. G. Howe found that the parents of one hundred and forty-five out of three hundred idiots were habitual drunkards.

### **The Use of Alcohol Shortens Life.**

It is very easy to prove that the influence of alcohol, as of every other poison, is to shorten life. Dr. Willard Parker, of New York, shows from statistics that for every ten temperate persons who die between the ages of twenty-one and thirty, fifty-one intemperate persons die. Thus it appears that the mortality of liquor-users is *five hundred per cent. greater* than that of temperate persons. These statements were

based on the tables used by life insurance companies.

According to the calculations of life insurance experts, the expectancy for life of a temperate person at the age of twenty years is forty-four years. The expectancy of an intemperate person, at the same age, is only fifteen years.

Between 60,000 and 100,000 persons die annually in this country alone from the effects of liquor. The same number die in England from the same cause. Then in these two Christian countries a human being dies every two and one-half minutes from alcoholic poisoning.

The graves of the victims, allowing twelve square feet for each, would in fifty years nearly cover a township. Arranged end to end, their coffins would make a continuous line from Cape Horn to the North Pole.

Arranged in one long funeral procession, with a hearse and a single vehicle for mourners for each, this vast army of dead drunkards would occupy two and a half years in passing a given point, and would wind two and one-half times around the globe.

### **Alcohol Predisposes the System to Disease.**

Dr. Anderson, of Glasgow, says, "I have found the use of alcoholic drinks to be the most powerful predisposing cause of malignant cholera with which I am acquainted. In Warsaw, ninety per cent. of all who died of cholera during the epidemic of 1832 were habitual drinkers." In the city of Tiflis, containing 20,000 inhabitants, every drunkard was swept away by cholera. In the Park hospital, New York, there were two hundred and four cases of cholera during an epidemic of the disease. Of these, only six were temperate, and they recovered, while two-thirds of the remainder died.

"Four-fifths of those who were swept away by the dreadful visitation of the cholera in 1832 were addicted to intoxicating drinks."

The whole population of St. Petersburg and Moscow ceased drinking liquor, being convinced that it was almost certain death to continue its use.

M. Huber said, "Persons given to drinking were swept away like flies."

Alcohol predisposes to other diseases as well as cholera. A very slight injury to an intemperate man is likely to result fatally. Surgeons in city hospitals find that they cannot expect the same degree of success in operations upon drinkers that they expect in the cases of temperate persons, a very slight operation, which would have occasioned no inconvenience in a total abstainer, often ending fatally.

### **Hereditary Effects of Drunkenness.**

The drinker himself is not the only sufferer from his vice. Indeed, it seems in many cases that he is not the greatest sufferer. He may even live out his threescore years and ten, in apparent defiance of the laws of Nature and the warnings of friends; but look at his children. Are they as strong and robust as he? Oh! no; instead, we often see them frail, nervous, imbecile, idiotic, poor specimens of the race. The iniquities of the father are visited upon the children.

"There are those [thousands] who have had diseased physical organisms bequeathed to them, and they are suffering from an irritable brain and an eccentric habit of thought, because their fathers drank spirits."—*Dr. Edmunds.*

### **Amount of Liquor Annually Manufactured.**

The amount of liquor annually manufactured and consumed in the United States reaches the enormous total of more than 260,000,000 gallons. About 12,000,000 gallons more are imported from foreign countries. This statement covers only the amount reported to the revenue officers. Immense quantities

are made and not reported, and considerable quantities are smuggled into the country. This immense quantity of liquid poison would make a lake ten feet deep, twenty rods wide, and a quarter of a mile long.

According to a scientific authority, the wine product of France for one year would make a ditch three and one-half feet deep, of the same width, and 4,000 miles long.

### **Liquor Costs More than Bread.**

The cost of liquor to consumers, in the United States, for the year 1867, has been officially estimated at \$1,483,491,865. The lowest estimate for the year 1872 is \$735,000,000. Fourteen hundred million dollars would buy seven barrels of flour for every man, woman, and child in the country; 28,000,000 teams would be required to draw the flour. This great caravan would wind five times around the earth if arranged in single file. Fourteen hundred million dollars, in one-dollar bills, would completely cover two townships. If the bills were joined at the ends, they would make a ribbon nearly long enough to reach to the moon.

The value of all the food products of the United States for a single year is \$600,000,000, or less than half the cost of alcohol. The cost of all the clothing is less than \$400,000,000, or less than one-third the cost of alcohol.

The annual consumption of liquor amounts, according to the estimate for 1867 by Commissioner Wells, to \$37.00 for each man, woman, and child in the United States.

According to the Census Returns of 1870, the annual value of all our agricultural and manufactured products and improvements was, during that year, nearly \$6,680,000,000. Taking this as the annual average, we find by Commissioner Wells' report that in five years the cost of liquor would exceed even this

vast sum, amounting to more than \$7,000,000,000. The country would then be better off if the liquor traffic were abolished, and, once in five years, a great conflagration should reduce to ashes the products of the labor of all its numerous industries.

All this, and millions more, is annually wasted. Is it not clear, then, that the use of alcoholic liquors is one of the greatest curses of civilization? It is the bane of morality, and the greatest cause of pauperism.

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