

similar histories, *viz.*, the exact truth about the children is rarely or never told. Sometimes this is due to incompetent willingness, but more often to systematic endeavor to mislead. Very frequently it is impossible to be exact, those testifying being not in possession of the essential facts, or retailing them at second or third hand. Again, in a large proportion of the cases, the parents testifying are themselves mentally incompetent. They are certainly rarely fit to rightly grasp the spirit of the inquiries. Most often the inaccuracies come from deliberate intention (sometimes innocent vanity, oftener *malice prepense*) to make the very best of the family and personal histories. These views are had (spoken privately of course, and with bated breath) from the excellent gentlemen who preside at these institutions and do their utmost to arrive at strict truths. It is also obvious to us when trying to collect testimony, as we have repeatedly found in clinical work in dispensary and private cases.

The one factor common to almost half the cases is alcoholism, forty per cent. conceded by many observers; and how much more can only be conjectured. Next comes other mental defects, many of these again might be referable to alcoholism as a not directly traceable but essential factor.

Krafft Ebbing shows the close relationship of alcoholism and mental disease by the exact analogy in acute alcoholism to the insane states from melancholia to imbecility. It begins with slight maniacal excitation, thoughts flow lucidly, the quiet become loquacious, the modest bold. Muscular action becomes imperative, the emotions become exalted, as shown by laughing, singing and dancing; then follows loss of control over esthetic ideas and moral impulses; the victim becomes cruel, cynical, dangerous; the mind weakens, consciousness grows dim, illusions arise; he stammers, staggers, and becomes a temporary paralytic and afterward a melancholic.

Alcohol, moreover, when misused, habitually injures all organs and tissues, notably the blood, resulting in pathologic states or increased susceptibility to disease; or intensifies any latent feebleness. In short, it breaks down the barriers which a vigorous vitality sets against the unceasing onslaughts of death. It incidently perverts the more delicate aggregations of cells, as in the brain and central nervous system, not only imperilling their integrity, but reducing to a lower level the vital force needed to reproduce offspring of full powers and resistances.

Dr. Hughlings Jackson says that those powers of mind developed last are least stable, and the first to be paralyzed by alcohol. Dr. Kraepelin shows that alcohol prolongs the reaction time needed for discrimination and decision. If such effects as these are recognized to fall upon normal organizations, how much more potent and serious upon those whose stability is already lessened from various causes natural or acquired.

As Darwin points out, all the evils from alcoholism can pass from father to son, becoming worse if the use of this poison is continued, until the result is self-limited in many happy instances by sterility.

The more pronounced effects of heredity are not to be remedied. The morbid effects of parents is maximum when conception takes place during drunkenness of one or both. (Dr. L. Grenier.)

The children of hereditary alcoholics show a tendency to excess in the