

source of crime. It has desolated many a home. It has done, in short, all the things that are graphically depicted upon the lantern slides of the "temperance" lecturer.

But drunkenness is not here the point. The drunkard, after all, important though he is, does not fill the whole sky. It is a pity to destroy the comfort of the home and amenity of social life for the sake of so small and so worthless a fraction of humanity: the more so as the drunkard, under prohibition, is apt merely to convert himself into a criminal, drinking illicit poison in place of honest beer and raving himself to ruin all the quicker.

The point that few people seem to care to dwell upon is, in the present crisis, the comfort and pleasure to be found in the ordinary and rational use of beer and wine and spirits such as is made of them by ninety-nine out of every hundred people who use them. This cannot be measured in any scientific fashion, or submitted to the proof of a formula. It is a matter of experience. Those who have never had it are not qualified to speak. But there are countless thousands of people whose private opinion, if they would only speak it out, is that of all the minor comforts of life from the cradle to the grave, beer and tobacco are easily first.

There has grown up in this matter a sort of conspiracy of silence. Nobody seems willing to bear witness to how widely diffused is the habit of normal wholesome drinking, and of the great benefits to be derived from it. The university where I have worked for nearly twenty years contains in its faculties a great number of scholarly, industrious men whose life work cannot be derided or despised even by the salaried agitator of a prohibitionist society. Yet the great majority of them "drink". I use that awful word in the full gloomy sense given to it by the teetotaler. I mean that if you ask these men to dinner and offer them a glass of wine, they will take it. Some will take two. I have even seen them take Scotch and soda. During these same years I have been privileged to know a great many of the leading lawyers of Montreal, whose brains and energy and service to the community I cannot too much admire. If there are any of them who do not "drink," I can only say I have not seen them. I can bear the same dreadful testimony on behalf of my friends who are doctors: and the same, and even more emphatic on behalf of all the painters, artists and literary men with whom I have had the good fortune to be very closely associated. Of the clergy, I cannot speak. But in days more cheerful than the present gloomy times, there were at least those of them who thought a glass of port no every dreadful sin.

And conversely, I can say with all conviction that I have never seen drunken professors lecturing to inebriated students, or tipsy judges listening to boozy lawyers, or artists in delirium