

## THE FIGHT AGAINST DRINK

*By Rev. J. M. Duncan, D.D.*

Never before was the fight against the drink traffic pressed so vigorously and effectively, throughout the civilized world, as at the present hour. For many years the organized religious forces and the forces that make for moral and social reform, have, throughout Christendom, been battling against this giant evil. Besides these, there are other forces which are to-day exercising a potent influence in the conflict with drink.

The organized industrial forces are on the side of abstinence. Mr. Wallace H. Rowe, president of the Pittsburg Steel Company, which employs 5,000 men, in filing a petition against the saloon, declared that the high cost of living was made more burdensome for the workmen because 20 per cent. of their earnings, on the average, go to the saloon. The Pennsylvania Railroad, which last year carried its millions of passengers without the loss of a single life, has a rigid rule against the use of liquor by its 125,000 employees, whether on duty or not. Even the frequenting of places where liquor is sold, is reckoned a sufficient cause for dismissal. The foundrymen of the United States employ an agent to work for the prevention of saloon licenses in the neighborhood of foundries and to promote total abstinence amongst the workers.

The organized military forces are opposed to the drink habit. The words of Mr. Lloyd George, the Minister of Munitions in Great Britain, have become famous: "We are fighting Germany, Austria and Drink, and, as far as I can see, the greatest of these three deadly foes is Drink." The entire prohibition, by the Russian government, of the trade in vodka, at an immediate loss of annual revenue totaling \$500,000,000, has immensely increased the effectiveness of the Russian army. The prohibition in France of the sale of absinthe during the war, wrought such good results in the army, that it was quickly followed by the permanent prohibition of the manufacture, sale or importation of this deadly beverage. A poster was circulated in Great Britain shortly after the opening of the war, which set forth, on the testimony of Lord

Roberts, Lord Wolseley and many other army leaders, that alcohol slows the power to see signals, confuses prompt judgment, spoils accurate shooting, hastens fatigue, lessens resistance to disease and exposure and increases shock from wounds. Lord Kitchener, Sir John French and Admiral Jellicoe have taken a strong stand against drink.

The forces working for the conservation of life and health and promotion of efficiency see in drink one of their chief foes. Sir Victor Horsley, the great British physician, says that in peace time the distillers and brewers kill 60,000 every year in Great Britain. The experience of the United Kingdom Temperance and General Provident Association, during 44 years, shows a death rate amongst the total abstainers insured in that institution of 27 per cent. less than amongst the general class of its insurers. Mr. Lloyd George says that the prohibition of vodka in Russia has increased the producing power of the people by from 30 to 50 per cent. "It is as if Russia had suddenly added millions of men to her labor reserves without having to provide for their support."

In Canada and Newfoundland the drink traffic is "on the run." The whole of Prince Edward Island is under prohibition, and so is Nova Scotia, with the exception of Halifax, prohibition for that city having been defeated only by the casting vote of the Speaker of the Provincial Legislature. New Brunswick has 9 counties out of 15 and 2 cities out of 3 under prohibition, in one form or another. In Quebec, 859 municipalities out of 1,168, and in Ontario 539 out of 842, are free from the legalized sale of drink. In Manitoba the proportion of the prohibition area is about the same as that of Ontario. In Saskatchewan no liquor can be sold in bars and clubs, but only in shops under the control of the government. When the war is over, but not earlier than December, 1916, the people of the province will have the right to vote on the question of reopening the bars and clubs, and in 1919 to vote whether the government shops shall be continued or complete prohibition