

## Intemperance Not the Prime Cause of Poverty

### Is Drunkenness an Effect?

To the funny man the above question may look like a joke. To the fellow who knows it all: "Of course, drunkenness is an effect resulting from a man misjudging his capacity for spirituous liquors." It is not the purpose here, however, to deal with drunkenness in the individual instance only, but in the aggregate.

Prohibition advocates would almost persuade the unthinking that with the abolition of the liquor traffic the rising sun of the millenium would be just over the hill. Careful investigation, however, proves beyond the shadow of a doubt that drunkenness is an effect; therefore, to remove the evil we must destroy the cause. The following quotation from The Binghamton (N.Y.) Independent, re-published in The Public (Chicago), throws a powerful light on the question and permits viewing it in its proper perspective:

"A table has been prepared by Prof. Warner, of Stanford University, based on fifteen separate investigations of actual causes of poverty, numbering in all over 100,000 cases in America, England and Germany. These investigations were conducted by the charity organization societies of Baltimore, Buffalo and New York City, the associated charities of Boston and Cincinnati, by Charles Booth in East London, and for Germany all the statements of Mr. Bohmert as to seventy-seven German cities. They include virtually all the facts that have been collected by trained investigators, unbiased by any theory. From these figures it appears that about 20 per cent. of the worst cases of poverty are due to misconduct, and about 75 per cent. to misfortune. Drink causes only 11 per cent., while lack of work or poorly-paid work causes nearly 30 per cent.

The reason why so many people who have only superficially investigated poverty consider intemperance and such weaknesses the main cause of poverty is that often before poverty becomes extreme enough to drive men to such charitable relief, the man has lost hope or self-respect, or strength of will, and has taken to drink, so that when the charitable find him, drink has affected the case. But the question is, what sent him to drink? It must be remembered, too, that it is the weakest and worst poverty which solicits alms, so that charitable people see the worst and weakest side of poverty, and hence are misled.

The best poor people can scarcely be driven to the charity society. Under the present system, too, poverty is often caused by people being unwilling to tell trade lies, or submit to wrong conditions, or to push some other worker out of office, acts which are often necessary conditions to-day to getting employment.

Says Ruskin: "In a community regulated by laws of demand and supply, and protected from open violence, the persons who become rich are, generally speaking, industrious, resolute, proud, unimaginative, insensitive, and ignorant. The persons who remain poor are the entirely foolish, the entirely wise, the sensitive, the well-informed, the improvident, the irregularly and impulsively wicked, the clumsy knave, open thief, and the entirely merciful, just and godly persons."

Some people are, therefore, poor because they are good. Even when the poverty is caused by moral weakness and vice—what causes that? Science answers almost categorically, "Environment." Hence it may be said that poverty is the result of individual and social causes, and that the individual causes are mainly the result of social causes.

All evidence worth considering goes to

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### For Better Conditions

Editor Tribune:

In my last contribution, I referred to the standard of our civilization, that we, the organized workers, are trying to improve. The fact that we are doing more to raise the standard of civilization than any other organization in the world deserves the sympathy of every well-meaning person. I desire to draw your attention to this fact: a low environment creates low desires, and down, down, down we go. We cannot have human progress without human desire, and we cannot create a desire for any that does not appeal to our reason; reason, being the higher quality, we cannot have a desire for anything unless we are able to set our mind in that direction, and we cannot set our mind on anything unless there is a reasonable expectation of getting it. In other words, we have to learn to create higher desires.

Therefore, the correctness of the trades union movement is continually working for better conditions. The fact that we are not able to accumulate much wealth is of very little consequence, so long as we are able to improve our environment. This fact was fully recognized by the Iron Moulders. In our strike with the Canada Foundry Co. we could have settled with them for \$3.00 a day for ten hours, but that was not what we wanted—we wanted \$2.75 for nine hours, which simply means setting up a higher standard for the workers.

There is another point that I would like to make clear to you; it is this, if we get below a certain point, the tendency is down, and if we reach that point the tendency is up. Where, or what,

is that point? Now, my decision is No! That is, that when we come to the point where we are able to organize, the tendency is up, for then we commence to practice brotherhood, or have consideration for one another, and it is only by doing that, considering each other's well-being, that we are able to rise a true manhood. We are then able to breathe the spirit of free men. Note this, to him that would be free, must he himself strike the blow, go and knock someone down? No.

Strike a blow to the idea that you are a slave—you are not necessarily a slave because you have to work. I do not think it is the right doctrine to promulgate that we are a lot of slaves. I'd! I receive some Socialist papers that hold up ideas like that. In fact, they become quite autocratic if you try to show them different. You know, a man need not be a Czar of Russia to be an autocrat. Let me point this out, where I think some well-meaning people go wrong. They fail to recognize the fact that we cannot set our mind on something beyond our reach, and by going around telling us we are a lot of slaves. If we breathe the spirit of free men, nothing can hold us down; we shall go on and on to higher and greater things.

J. E. Stewart,  
Iron Moulder.

Bakers' strike still on.

The Canadian Order of Odd Fellows, in revising their insurance rates, have not advanced the rates of members prior to 1895, thereby bringing no hardship on the old members of the Order.

### Why these Papers Were Not Delivered

T. McCarthy, 102 Eastern avenue. Refused.

W. H. Steer, 416 Front street east. Refused.

W. Robinson, 118 Duke street. No name at this address.

J. J. Quinn, 80 Esplanade east. Refused, does not live here.