

A writer in Knight's Pictorial History of England says:

"Excess in the use of wine and intoxicating liquors was now the charge against the English; and it seems to be borne out not only by the quantity consumed, but by the extent to which taverns had multiplied by the end of Elizabeth's reign."

Besides the 56 light wines and the 30 strong wines in use, distilled liquors were beginning to be much used in England. The chief of these were "rosa solis" and "aqua vite." This "aqua vite" of Elizabeth's time does not appear to have been the aqua vite (or brandy) of our day, but nothing more or less than Irish whiskey, manufactured by Irish settlers in Pembroke-shire, who were first established there in King Hal's time.

As to beer and ale, there was single beer or small ale and double beer; and double double beer and dagger-ale and bracket.

But the favorite drink, as well as the chief means of vulgar debauch, was a kind of ale called "huffcap," also called mad-dog, angel's food, dragon's milk, and other ridiculous names; "and never," says Harrison, "did Romulus and Remus suck their she-wolf with such eager and sharp devotion as these men hale at huffcap till they be as red as cocks and little wiser than their combs." (N. B.—Does this give us any insight into the true meaning of the word "cockscorb"?)

The higher classes, who were able to afford such a luxury, brewed a generous liquor for their own consumption, which they did not bring to table till it was two years old. This was called March ale, from the month in which it was brewed. A cup of choice ale was often as rarely compounded with dainties as the finest wines. Sometimes it was warmed and qualified with sugar and spices; sometimes with a toast, often with a roasted crab or apple, making the beverage still known under the name of lamb's wool; whilst to stir the whole with a sprig of rosemary was supposed to give additional flavor.

Nor did the excess of Elizabeth's reign suffer any diminution in James'.

A statute of 1604 is a strong protest against the abuse of hotels and taverns:

"Whereas the ancient and true and principal use of inns, alehouses and victualling houses was for the receipt, relief and lodging of wayfaring people, travelling from place to place, and for the supply of the wants of such people as are not able by greater quantities to make their provision of victuals, and not meant for entertaining and harboring of lewd and idle people to spend and consume their money and their time in lewd and drunken manner;—it is enacted that only travellers and travellers' friends, and laborers, for one hour at dinner time, or lodgers can receive entertainment," &c.

This Act was abortive, for only two years later another Act was made "for the better repressing of ale houses, whereof the multitudes and abuses have been and are found intolerable, and still do and are likely to increase, &c."

In the same year an attempt was made to punish the buyers as well as the sellers:

"Whereas the loathsome and odious sin of drunkenness is of late grown into common use within this realm, being the root and foundation of many other enormous sins," a fine of five shillings for drunkenness and three shillings for *tippling* was imposed.

We must praise the perseverance of these legislators if we cannot chronicle their success, for three years later (1609) they pass another act, the preamble of which again acknowledges the increase of drunkenness:

"Whereas, notwithstanding all former laws and provisions already made, the inordinate and extreme vice of excessive drinking and drunkenness doth more and more abound," &c.

In 1623 this last statute was renewed just as if it had been never enacted.

In 1621 there were no less than 13,000 public houses in England.

That drunkenness should have increased under the Stuarts is not to be wondered at, since James was known to be an habitual drunkard. Ladies of high rank copied the royal morals, and so led intoxicated at the King's feet.

H. B.

What avails the show of external liberty, to one who has lost the government of himself.